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THE
HEIRESS OF HAUGHTON;

OR,
THE MOTHER'S SECRET.

BY
THE AUTHOR OF
"EMILIA WYNDHAM," "TWO OLD MEN'S TALES, &c."

—— As gentle
As zephyrs, blowing below the violet,
Not wagging his sweet head——
CYMBELINE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

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THE HEIRESS OF HAUGHTON.

CHAPTER I.

In him alone 'twas natural to please;
His motions all accompanied with grace;
And paradise was opened in his face.

DRYDEN.

It was a beautiful evening.

The day had been warm, and the sun, now sinking towards the tufted hills of Windsor Forest, shed a rich golden light upon the tops of those fine trees, which adorn the Playing Fields of Eton.

The Thames, smooth as a mirror, and of the deepest blue, was seen at a little distance, gleaming with his green aits, through the foliage and between the noble and columnar trunks of these secular trees—whilst the rooks were slowly wending their homeward flight towards the hoary towers of that castle, which overhangs and adorns this beautiful scene—its western windows glittering in the sunbeams.

In short, it was one of those perfectly delightful English evenings which are the glory of our English summers. The Playing Fields were quieter than usual, for the hubbub of the day was over; or, perhaps, the still influence of the evening was felt by those imaginative English lads there loitering and wandering about—for imaginative, English boys may most especially be called; and there is something within them that seems most peculiarly responsive to the sweet influences of Nature.

Groups of boys, from little fellows of nine to ten years old, to youths upon the verge of manhood, were scattered about in these beau-

tiful playing grounds. Some sauntering in idle conversation with one or two others; some strolling alone, lost in boyhood's teeming thoughts; others, sitting upon the benches beneath the trees with books, which they were reading with avidity—not lesson-books, you may be sure, but novels; perhaps, in their way, quite as improving;—and ministering high and generous food to the hearts and imaginations of these young, ardent lads. Some little fellows were playing hockey; some of the magnates were resting upon their bats—the last game of cricket having terminated—all in their several ways enhancing the interest and beauty of the scene, without disturbing the tranquillising effect of this sweet evening.

Among the groups we distinguish two boys of somewhat unequal height. The arm of the taller one is thrown over the shoulders of the other. They are walking alone together, and seem engaged in that close, confidential conversation which is the delight of those united by the strong, fervent ties of a boy's friendship.

See how they saunter along, choosing one of the quietest and most retired walks, engaged in serious discussion, and seeming little to regard anything that is going on around them—lost in the delightful interchange of thoughts, bright and fervent, like themselves. For they are both boys remarkable for the wholesome freshness of their feelings and characters, for the earnest simplicity of their dispositions—and for more, both of imagination and feeling, than is common even with youths of their years.

They are both also distinguished, not alone by these intellectual qualities,—they are as celebrated in the school for their personal beauty and their personal accomplishments, as for their characters and attainments. At hare and hounds, at the cricket match, at hockey, at leaping, at running—who bear away the palm but they? They are the first in these, as in all the rest.

All the rest, however, must be said with one exception—their school exercises. They

were neither of them remarkable for these. They both kept their places passably well,—but they neither of them were particularly celebrated in business with the masters. Not “to aspire to glory, but to avoid disgrace,” seemed to be their only object here. And, yet, there was something about them both, that even the masters prized and were proud of, they scarcely knew why. As for the young community around them—as often happens in such cases—by a peculiar instinct of their own, which discovers the higher order of merit, before it has made itself evident through any peculiar achievements—these two were looked upon, by the boys in general, as the glory of the school.

Everyone was proud to be of their acquaintance ;—even those who had not that privilege took pride, in that they belonged to the same community. Their dress and manners were imitated :—their witty or clever speeches were retailed :—the highest auguries were drawn as to their future success in life ;—everything

was expected from them that was great and renowned—nobody well knew why.

It was the influence of what the French call *caractère*, I believe, that effected all this.—It is the secret of the strongest influences that one human being can exercise over another.

These boys both belonged to families of the “middle remove” class of life, or, perhaps, strictly speaking, one ought to say, the “upper fifth” of society. Their parents were wealthy and well-born, and lived at their country-houses in their respective counties—magnates upon a small scale in their particular neighbourhoods. Both boys, at the seats of their respective fathers, had enjoyed the same free, wholesome English country life until they were sent to Eton. That life of the woods and of the fields—that enterprising life of nature, which to the boy is so wholesome and so delightful; which, in itself, fosters so many free and generous aspirations;—and which, when home affords other advantages equally necessary to

a just development, is the very best early schooling a boy can receive.

These additional advantages, however, in these two instances, had been denied. The boys had lived at home, it is true, and had neither of them been injured by the low or vicious associations, or the false training of too many schools;—but this was all. Little pains, except the most superficial discipline and teaching, had been expended upon either of them. They had both happened to belong to those sort of people who have no idea of any duty as regards the education of their children, but that of sending them in due course of time to the proper schools, and paying their bills without grumbling. For the rest, they had it all much their own way. As little boys, their mothers, or their sisters' governesses had taught them to read;—their mothers had also, I believe, read a chapter in the Bible with them on Sundays. As they grew older, a daily tutor had given them an hour or two of Latin; and at about twelve years of age they were sent to

Eton. At Eton the same course was pursued. Eton was expected to do everything for them. A few letters from home—baskets of game and fruit; a visit now and then from an uncle or a father—a dinner to a selected party of their particular friends—a sovereign into the hand as they parted in the evening, had been the sum of the care they had received.

In the holidays it was much the same.—They saw little of their parents, who were engaged in their own pursuits of visiting, or gardening, or farming, or shooting, as the case might be, and they happened neither of them to have sisters capable or willing, as so many are, of assisting insensibly in the improvement of boys of their age—and supplying, in some degree, the duties of a mother. Not even this however, dispenses a mother from this sacred duty, which she, and she alone, can adequately perform, and which so many women most admirably and successfully do perform.

Enough of this.

The taller boy is a fine, handsome, nobly developed creature, with fair hair, and large, spirited, brave blue eyes : features bold and regular—the very type of the old Norseman beauty. Accordingly his fellows have nicknamed him the Viking.

The other is of a different kind. His figure is symmetry itself—finely modelled to the perfection of united grace, activity, and strength;—his features are beautiful—expressive of all that is high and majestic, and all that is tender and passionate at once. His dark eyes melt and kindle—flash defiance when excited to anger, or are suffused with but too ready tears when softened by feeling ; his beautiful dark brown hair hangs clustering over his fine intellectual brow, white as the waxy tea rose. His fellows have named him the Celestial Archer—he does, in truth, remind one of that statue “which enchants the world—” The Apollo who has just sent forth his shaft from the twanging bow. But it is mostly in the perfection and contour of his figure ; for in

the face there is a something English,—something passionate, thoughtful, intense, and deeply earnest, which the Grecian divinity wants, after all.

That the community of Eton had honoured them by thus surnaming them, would be in itself a warrant how highly they were rated; how individually they stood out from the community.

They had not known each other before they met at school; but happening to lodge at the same Dame's, and their rooms to be next door to each other, an intimacy had sprung up, which had soon ripened into a friendship—a friendship the closer, perhaps, because with many points of resemblance in circumstances, early associations, tastes, and likings, they were in character extremely unlike each other.

The Viking was brave, reserved, stern, cold, and undemonstrative in his usual deportment.

The Celestial Archer was vehement, ardent, positive, demonstrative.

The one was slow to anger—but his anger,

once excited, was terrible. Cold, stern, and measured in its expression, but deep, abiding, and vindictive.

A word or gesture would kindle up the other to a flame—which, at a word of apology or concession, would as rapidly subside into cordial forgiveness. The passion of rage which found vent in the kindling cheeks and rising tears, would melt again into drops of soft and generous contrition, whenever his anger might have carried him too far. I think I see him now pressing a companion's hand in cordial reconciliation, and turning half away to hide the too ready moisture that the heart-swell sent up to his eyes.

We all respected and looked up with admiration and a certain awe at the Viking—so majestic, so commanding, so self-possessed—but we adored the Celestial Archer. As for me, at least, I loved him with a passionate devotion and admiration, which only the heart of a schoolboy can feel.

No one pretended to rival the friendship

these two felt for each other. It was their privilege to be considered as standing upon equal ground; for the rest of us, we all looked up to them involuntarily.

Now they are walking, as I said, together, sauntering up and down, engaged in one of those interminable conversations in which they seemed to take such delight; more closely united than ever by a circumstance which took place at the beginning of this half.

The present conversation seems to be one of more than usual interest, and so it is—for it is upon a subject to which the Celestial rarely refers, and which is known only to this one friend. Not for the universe would this proud and delicately-feeling boy have exposed the secret of his heart to any but the sacred, holy eye of the one true friend.

He has a little narrow crimson ribbon which he wears close to his bosom, and from which depends a little tiny heart, in which is a very minute curl of soft, brown hair.

The Viking does not laugh at his friend's

secret. To him such a love as his is a sacred thing. They seldom enter upon the subject, but when they do, it is with an earnestness and delicacy which would do honour to any heart.

“Yet, she is but a mere child,” the Archer is saying, “eleven or twelve years old at most; but she has the delicacy, sense, and goodness of an angel-woman. So sweet and obliging in her temper—so gay and lively in her spirits—so intrinsically good—such an angel of love and piety. It is enough only to see her saying her prayers at church—as I do when I am staying there, and we go into their great pew—to make one pious oneself . . . and then her name—Imogene! What a sweet name, and so exactly her.”

There, my good reader, this is inserted to show why the history of Imogene opens with an account of the Celestial Archer.

To return to the circumstance which I was about to relate, and which had still further rivetted this youthful friendship.

They both of them belong to the boats.

Neither of them, as I hinted, was celebrated for sapping; they seemed contented just to hold their own in the school, but appeared indifferent to distinguished success upon the forms—their pride appeared chiefly to lie in surpassing the rest in all sorts of manly sports and exercises. Boating and cricketing, of course, they excelled in. In the last they were forced to take opposite sides, for no one would play a match against them united,—and they each steered a separate boat, for much the same reason.

How they managed to combine the rivalry this excited with their perfect and unalterable friendship, I do not exactly know. Sometimes it seemed to me as if an unnatural fierceness would flash up in the Viking's eyes, when the Celestial Archer had beaten him at cricket; and he would speak coldly and shortly to the other when—the game over—he came to take his arm with his usual affectionate cordiality. Sometimes I could observe a flush of red-hot

colour just flare up into the cheek of the Archer, at the tone of voice in which he might be answered—but the thing was over in a moment—before a man could say, “Behold, it is there,” it was gone—and the friends were as happy together as ever.

The incident which seemed so greatly to strengthen this close friendship took place one evening, when I myself chanced to be present. I was one of the boaters.

It was a half-holiday, at the end of May, shortly before the Midsummer vacation. There was a small regatta at that bend of the river, which is nearly opposite to Clifden, and we were to row a match there.

Upon this occasion, as upon others, as I have mentioned, the two friends steered separate boats, and were opposed to each other in the match of six oars.

What a beautiful evening was that! How lovely looked the woods of Clifden, as they swept down those fine steepes to the Thames—which, smooth as a mirror, and clear as crystal,

reflected all the innumerable tints—the rich yellows, browns, soft greens, and greys of the spring foliage. The noble oaks and magnificent elms were towering, in all their wealth of beauty and grandeur, above the lower clustering copse trees. The sun shone brightly upon the landscape, giving a glow of life to everything around; white swans were floating upon the gilded waters—the light boats were skimming over the shining surface, forming little ripples with their prows. Now a white sail was hoisted, and spread its snowy wing to the breeze which began to rise—the little skiff to which it belonged, careering swiftly along—yet to be passed by a six-oar, which rapidly coursed along the water; the boys, in their pink-striped shirts, bending vigorously to the oar, and saluting the sailing boat with a shout of triumph, as they swept gaily by.

The single-oared wherries, like shells afloat, were not wanting there—the one man they contained, urging them onwards with a speed as astounding as beautiful—in short, the river

was a scene of gay confusion, enlivened still further by the bright sun, the blue sky, the white coursing clouds, the sweet fresh breeze, and the varied crowd of spectators upon the banks, in carriages, on horse-back, or on foot—from the strange gipsy women of Burnham Beeches, to the fair Queen of Clifden herself—from the farming boy in his holiday suit, to the most exquisite of horse or man that ever adorned Rotten-Row. I was rather a singular boy, I think, myself:—I always loved observation better than action—reflection upon my own thoughts, rather than interchange of thoughts with others. I used to mope about a good deal by myself, and the boys, to their credit be it said, let me alone—partly, because I was, as a scholar, considered rather a credit to the place—if I may venture to own so much without being suspected of undue vanity—partly, because I really was a very delicate boy. There was no disguising this; I was so manifestly unfit to struggle and make my way in the busy throng, that—with a sense of justice

and good nature common to boys, who, as I think, are usually strictly just according to their ideas of justice, and generally good-natured where they suspect neither pretence nor affectation—I was suffered to live in my own way, a good deal apart, and undisturbed,—it being evident to the most superficial observer, that with me this was rather a matter of necessity than choice.

I loved to row alone in my wherry, keeping a little apart, so as to have the water a good deal to myself, and to watch, at a short distance, the proceedings of that busy crowd to which I so little belonged.

And now the race between the six-oars begins.

Beautiful sight !

How the light vessels skim over the water, like sea-birds !—how the steerers bend and bow almost to a level with the benches of the boat !—how the six rowers, with one sympathetic motion, reach forward, rise and fall simultaneously !—how the accompanying boats fly onwards to be present at the termination of the race !—and

how cheering cries, responsive to the efforts of the rowers, greet them from the crowds upon the river side !

Mermaid and Water-Lily—which will be the victor? The Viking steers the Mermaid,—the Celestial Archer the Water-Lily—now this,—now that, has the lead.

The Viking has it !—He is half-a-boat—he is a whole length, a-head ! You see him just cast up that noble head of his with a gesture of exultation, and then bend and bow to his task again.

The Celestial Archer glances at his crew. “Now—now !”—with fresh vigour they bend to the oar. The steerer bows himself almost to a level with the earth. Forward they go, cleaving the water, which breaks in light foam around the prow of the swiftly flying little vessel—forward !—forward ! They pass ahead of the Viking, just as he almost touches the goal.

A shout of triumph rang from all sides. Both steerers had started up as by one impulse. The Celestial Archer, his face all one

glow of joy and triumph, glanced proudly and exultingly over his boat's-crew ; at this time thrown negligently back, resting on their oars, taking breath, after their almost super-human exertions : then he directed a look at the adversary, the defeated boat. It seemed as if he expected sympathy even at that trying moment of defeat from the friend he loved—but no. The face of the Viking was dark and sullen. His mortification was, indeed, excessive. He had the palm of victory in his very hand, when it had thus been snatched away. He could ill brook defeat at any time, and upon this occasion the deafening shouts of congratulation which greeted the triumph of the rival crew, came with peculiar bitterness to his proud heart. One glance was exchanged. The glowing cheek of the Celestial Archer turned pale ; the bright, generous, gladness of his eye was dimmed ;—he sat down quietly, and remained silent, and as if exhausted, whilst the boat, amid acclamations ringing from every side, returned leisurely to the starting-place.

The Viking, too, resumed his seat ; and the defeated boat was quietly rowed away.

It was as they were returning in the evening, that the accident I am about to mention happened.

The two boys had left their larger boats, and each was returning homewards in his own wherry. They were late ; the weather had changed, the evening was dark and lowering,—the sun had been some time gone down, and the twilight was thickening almost to darkness over the river, the clouds lay so heavily around the horizon.

The two boys rowed at some little distance from each other, not as usual, side by side, exchanging their jokes, and lively, fanciful conversation, but both silent and both moody. The Viking mortified and sullen ;—the Archer wounded to the very core of his heart.

He was but a boy—a warm-tempered, generous, loving boy : he had yet to learn that half melancholy indulgence, which man, as he advances in life, discovers that he he must needs

grant to the infirmities of his fellow-man. To that heart of his which glowed so warmly, and beat so freely within his breast, he expected to find a responsive heart. His friend's triumph would have been as his own. He had struggled hard for victory ;—that was due to himself and his crew—due to the generous, emulous feelings of a breast which aspired to the crowning excellence in all things ;—but had *he* been defeated after he and his had done their best,—had the victory been awarded to his friend—it would more than have consoled him. He would have rejoiced once more, as over and over again, before this he had rejoiced—when the strength and unparalleled vigour of the Viking had triumphed over him.

Upon the water especially.

This was, indeed, the first victory against the Mermaid, which the Water-Lily had achieved.

He did not weigh the infinite mortification inflicted—when he, esteemed the invincible, first takes his place among the vanquished—against what he thought such cold and unkind

want of sympathy. He only felt acutely the contrast with what his own feelings upon such an occasion would have been, and at once jumped to the usual conclusion of the hurt spirit—that the Viking did not care for him at all.

So, sorely wounded, and silent, and sullen, in his turn, he quietly pursued his way—the Viking preserving his moody attitude of stern, gloomy pride.

I was at a little distance, observing the two friends, and watching the aspect of things with interest, and a sort of sadness upon my own part,—when, suddenly, there was a loud cry! I started up, but only to behold one of the wherries overset, and floating, keel upwards. It was the Archer's,—and, before a man could say, "'Tis there,"—the heavy plunge of the Viking into the water was heard.

He had put on a large thick boat coat, for the evening was chilly; he did not even stay to throw it off, but plunged head foremost into the river after his friend.

That sort of precipitation was not usual with

him. There was a passion and vehemence in it, which showed where his heart lay.

The wherry had been upset by a cord fastened to the bank, and to a heavy coal barge in the river, which, in the glimmering twilight, the Archer had not observed; he had taken the line between the barge and the shore. The Viking was proceeding upon the outer side. Their mutual repulsion of the moment it was which occasioned the accident.

Both sank, and were lost to sight.

There was a general cry for help—a general shriek, rather than shout, of horror. Suddenly, the head of the Viking appears above the water, the heavy coat seems to weigh him down; nevertheless, he gives one or two vigorous strokes, raises himself for a moment, looks round, and then dives again.

The men on board the barge, and some of us in our boats, had by this time disembarrassed ourselves of our clothes, and all that could swim had plunged into the river. The first effort of some was to upturn the

boat,—we found the boy had been sucked under it; others dived and plunged where the Viking had disappeared, weighed down, it seemed, by the weight of his clothing.

All passed in a moment's time—but what ages are some moments!

It was well we were there. Once more the Viking emerges, but he is exhausted—he can scarcely rise to the surface. He holds a body supported by one arm, part of the clothing between his teeth; he is making a superhuman effort—his strength is fast giving way—his eyes are becoming dimmed by the dreadful death-stare; but he has saved his friend!

It was just in time. We cluster round him, and the two are landed, both insensible, but safely, upon the river's bank.

“Where am I?” was Albert Faulconer's first exclamation, as, after the usual means

had been employed for a considerable length of time, he opened his eyes, and, after a few convulsive heavings and struggles, recovered the power of speech.

He looked confused, like one suddenly awakened out of a profound sleep—stared round—shook his head up and down, as if to awaken his senses, and then asked again—

“Where am I? Have I been dreaming?”

“No, not dreaming: but dead you have been, Archer,” said one of his companions—
“how do you feel yourself now, old fellow?”

“Rather particularly uncomfortable, I should say—but what’s the matter?—Where have we all been?—this is not my bed.”

“No, it’s not your bed, sure enough,” answered another of his companions, Stanley;
“it’s a poor bed, to be sure—but better than the bed of the river, it seems to me.”

“Cold work among the fishes—ay, Celestial? What’s that Shakspeare says about Phœbus pillowing his head upon the wave—rather a cold pillow, heigh! my Archer?”

“Young gentlemen, please to let the patient alone,” interrupted the apothecary, who had been called in, and now returned from visiting his patient in the next room—“the young gentleman requires quiet—both the gentlemen require quiet. Please all of you, but one, to quit the room—one young gentleman to watch and administer any little thing to the patient that may be necessary, is all that is now required. I am sure we are greatly indebted to you, for your assistance.” We had all certainly been rubbing with all our might, or running to and fro, and offering every help in our power. “But now nothing more but a good sleep is necessary, after which the patient may be safely allowed to return to Eton.”

The Archer looked bewildered, but he turned his eyes upon me, as if asking an explanation, and laid his hand at the same time upon mine, as if I were the one he wished to stay with him.

“Very good,” said the doctor.

He had observed already how much more of the old woman than of the young boy there

seemed to be about me—"Very good—you—Mister—Mister—Lenham."

"Very good—you, Mister Lenham—please to stay with us, and the rest of the gentlemen may be released."

"Good night, then, Archer—Good night, Celestial."

"Good night, Albert—Good night, Falconer—pleasant dreams, and we'll tell Oxley all about it, and that you'll be home to-morrow—He'll be home to-morrow night, doctor?"

"Immediately after breakfast."

"And Hako—the Viking?"

"Mr. Hardress, do you mean?"

"Yes, to be sure. How's he?"

"He has suffered most—but it's all right, I hope, now—or will be soon."

"How's that?" cried I—"I did not understand that—what's the matter with him?"

"Oh, a trifle, a trifle," answered the doctor—for his patient's face became suddenly suffused with a crimson flush, as he started up, exclaiming—"Hardress! Hardress!—What of him?"

“ Oh, nothing of any consequence,” replied the man of medicine, with a sort of gentle violence replacing his patient’s shoulders upon the pillow—“ You must both be quiet, and you’ll soon be as if nothing had happened.”

The boys, one after the other, had by this time departed out of the room—followed by the doctor, after he had given me a few directions.

The Archer continued to hold my hand ; he lay, however, some time quite still ; his beautiful eyes fixed upon the wall before him, lost in his own thoughts, and as if endeavouring to collect his recollections.

At last——

“ Now I have it,” he said suddenly.

“ I remember it—I begin to remember it”—he went on—“ It was like a dream at first—but now it begins to get real—We were returning home after the Regatta—eh?—There was a Regatta, surely—*that’s* not a dream?”

“ Oh, no ! sure enough, that’s no dream, and here’s your silver medal. *I* took care of that for you—‘ Token of the Victory of the Water-Lily.’ ”

“I remember—I remember it all now,” pushing away the medal—“take it away, I hate the sight of it.”

“Why? [Celestial!”

“I was coming home in my wherry, and it capsized. Surely now I remember the plunge into the water—it was so cold—and I was so hot—I think I lost my senses at the first plunge—I can’t remember an atom more.”

“Nor how you got out?”

“Not an iota—I think I must have struck my head against something, for you know I am a capital diver, and can hold my breath against any one but the Viking,” with a sigh. “It’s very odd he wasn’t among ’em here.”

“No—but that’s because he’s as bad as you are himself. Didn’t you hear what the doctor said?”

“Oh, my head—it’s all confusion, as if the waters were rushing into my ears still—yes—I remember now—Was he capsized too?”

“No—no—he sprang into the water after you.”

“After me !”

“To be sure he did—and saved your life.”

The tears gushed up into his eyes—and again a glow, beautiful as the glow of Heaven, came over his face.

“*He !*—Hardress? *He !*”

“To be sure, who else?—Who loves you as he does?—The rest of us stopped to pull our coats off—but Hardress, down he plunged headlong, with his heavy pilot blue on—and it’s a mercy he was not drowned to keep you company. It was not like the Viking—I never saw him do such a rash, impetuous thing before.”

He pressed my hand, glanced up into my face—one glance only it was—but such a glance—he said nothing—his content seemed too big for words—but his countenance was enough.

There was another silence—then he began once more—

“Tell me again.”

“The doctor says you must be quiet,” I answered—for his agitation frightened me—his chest seemed to swell almost convulsively, as if his heart was too big for it to hold ; and the tears every now and then came gushing to his eyes, and rolling in large round drops over his cheeks.

“Tell me again—Do you think anything does one good like *that*?—And I could be thinking that he did not care for me!”

I thought it best to tell him all that I could recollect of what had happened.

“In his arms!—You are sure he had his arms round me And so you brought us to shore Clasped in his arms!—You did not part us?”

“Not till we got you safe to land. He clenched you so firmly, that we thought it better not to try to part you.”

“Then, if we had died, we should have stiffened so—eh?—And would they have buried us in the same grave, do you think?”

“Perhaps so—I have heard of such

things being done—but you didn't die, you see."

"I wish we had—I almost wish we had—I'd so liked to have been buried so. They'd have put a stone, or a marble, or something or other over us. There we should have been together—and at the last trump we'd been found there together . . ."

"How you talk!—Don't be so foolish."

"Foolish!—Yes, I know. It's more than foolish, perhaps, it's wrong. One ought to be very thankful—but somehow, Lenham, I wish it had been as I say—Oh, I'd have liked to have died with his arm round me—he saving me. Yes, it's foolish, and perhaps its wrong, but, Lenham, I would."

Poor boy!

"I am *sure* it's foolish, and I *believe* its wrong," I said. "Why should *you* wish to die?—you ought to thank God, and I hope you do and will, for saving your life—that's what *my* mother would tell me to do, I know,"—said the

young preacher.—They used to call me the minister at Eton.

“I don’t know for that—I never had a mother of that sort—I mean, that told me much about such things—I suppose she left it to the parson—I might have been more like you, Lenham—and that sort of thing, if I’d had a mother like your’s.—One wants a mother of that kind sometimes, to put things into a boy’s head, he won’t take from any body else.—Don’t you love your mother very much? —As much as I do Hardress, I dare say.”

“A thousand times more.”

“That’s impossible.”

“A mother is so soft and kind.—A mother flings herself into the flames to save her child—and she never pouts when he wins the medal.”

I was sorry I said *that*—when his face clouded over painfully.

“That’s not like you, Lenham, to remind a fellow of such things—and it’s not fair to compare the two.—A mother’s glory—her selfish glory is in her son—he can’t be her

rival—he never *is* her rival—it's not fair to talk so.”

“I own it's not fair—I wish I had not said it.”

“That *is* like you, Lenham—now I know you again—I will say you *are* the fairest fellow I know.—You may be a preacher—they may call you ‘Praise the Lord Barebones,’ if they will, but you are the fairest of them all—Hardress himself, is not more bold to speak the truth, or stand by a fallen man.”

I have compiled a story, that I thought worth recording, from the various materials which came to my hand. Some, as has already appeared, from my own personal experience and observation, the rest from the reports and records of others.

I thought that the observation of human nature, and, in some of its rarest examples of excellence, when placed under circumstances

the most unique and exceptional, might afford matter for not uninteresting observation ;—but I am no artist in the arrangement of stories ;—and am, indeed, rather a sceptic as to the advantage of most conventional methods of arrangement.

Thoughts, feelings, and events, thrown down, as they occur to the writer, have often a force and nature about them, which might be lost by an attempt upon his part at a certain symmetrical arrangement, for which his somewhat untutored genius may be ill fitted.—I will, therefore, beg my reader to pardon the method of my story, if I can succeed in interesting him in the story itself, and allow me to carry him back some years before proceeding with my Eton narrative.

CHAPTER II.

And the pure and good intent
Of the child he noted well,
And the high and holy bent of the thoughts. . .

MRS. ACTON TINDAL.

THE course of my relation leading me to a different place, and a different period of time—my obliging critics, I repeat, must please to excuse these abrupt interruptions, and to remember, that—in relating the history of men's lives, it is well, nay it is necessary, to seize upon those portions of them which are characteristic of their dispositions, or important to their destiny, passing over the remainder with little or no notice.—A history is not a daily chronicle—It does not profess to relate *all* that

happened—It is a series of pictures connected less by the links of time than of circumstance. These breaks and pauses in the narrative seem to me to be essential, so far as the omission of insignificant details is essential, to every tolerable relation.

And so, having attempted thus much in my own defence, I proceed to carry out my principle, in a somewhat outrageous manner, for I must carry you back to the very fountains of those events, which are about to fill my tale.

From two far-distant springs this current of my story will appear to rise; but they flow towards each other as they descend to the ocean, and will be found to mingle in time.

“What is to be done?”

“What *can* be done?—What *ought* to be done?”

“Was ever situation so cruelly perplexing?”

If one did but know what was right!—If one could but be assured what was true!

What credit ought, in common sense, to be

attached to such an assertion uttered at such a moment ; when reason seemed tottering upon her seat ; when passion was all aroused ; when the unaccountable vehemence of hatred, which had so long animated the unhappy victim, had assumed every appearance of the wildest malignity and revenge ?

The two friends sat over the expiring embers of the fire in Lady Emma's dressing-room. Pale, and cold, and shuddering ;—yet forgetting to arouse the flame that might have cheered them.

She had been a prey to the most cruel perplexity as to the duties demanded of her. She had already, as she now thought, mistaken her part, and her mistake had brought down this heavy dispensation upon her head—but how, how was every perplexity now increased, every line of duty inextricably, as it would seem, entangled !

What must they do ?

“ Oh ! that Alice had but lived one half-hour longer !—that she had but left some unques-

tionable proof behind, that the fact which she had, in that moment of agony, so passionately asserted—was, if true—indisputable.”

“Patience—patience—dear Emma!” said Grace; “and now, if you would but go to bed—Sleep, in cases of this nature, is the best counsellor.—If you could rest—then you could pray—and then light would come.”

“Light!—No, Grace—It has been put out of the power of even Providence itself to give me the light I need—for the woman is dead—dead!”

“Oh, Emma! don’t say so.—If we are not allowed a clearer light as regards the fact—light to guide us to the duty required in this wretched uncertainty to which you seem condemned, you will surely find. Those gleamings of brightness which come into the soul—that voice speaking within, which we cannot gainsay—are realities, and the most important of realities.—Let us try to rest, and compose our spirits with this assurance—to-morrow we shall be able to see more clearly what *ought*—or

rather what *can* be done.—Will you not go and give little Imogene a kiss before you lie down ?”—Grace added, as Lady Emma, in a bewildered, weary, wretched manner, listlessly rose to ring for her maid.

“What?—Yes, perhaps, I ought.”

“Ought!—Your poor little child!—Surely *that* will be a comfort to you!”

“*My* child!—Oh, Grace!—That is the most horrible part of all.—I feel as if she could never be as a child to me again—She’s not my child—She’s Alice’s—she’s the gamekeeper’s, child.”

“My dear Emma!”

“Oh! I know she’s my child in blood!”—she broke out wildly—“but it’s all been such a horrible deception—I don’t know who is—or who is not—what is or what is not—but Oh!—Oh, me!—I *do* feel—and it’s the only thing I am sure that I *do* feel—that I have no child any more.”

“Poor little thing,” said Grace.

“Ah, yes! Poor little thing!—Poor little

thing! And what are we to do with her?"

"Do with her?—Do justly and kindly by her—Emma, you astonish me!"

"Do I?—Then it's no more than I astonish myself—I verily believe my heart is turned to stone."

She looked so wildly and unnaturally that Mrs. Birchell felt there was nothing to be done but to get her to bed as soon as possible.

She rang for the maid, and saw her friend laid upon her pillow, where, to the immense present relief of Mrs. Birchell—by this time nearly quite worn-out herself—the poor bewildered sufferer fell almost instantly fast asleep.—Leaving Emma to the care of her maid, Grace stole softly out of the room; but before retiring to the one which had been prepared for herself, she stole into the chamber, at a little distance from that Lady Emma occupied, which had been, since her return home, appropriated to Imogene.

Strange to say, she found something of the same hallucination which possessed Lady

Emma, stealing over herself.—Do what she would, she could not regard the little girl in the usual light.—A certain *prestige*, that surrounded her, was gone.—The descendant of a good family, the heiress of an immense fortune, this little creature had been but half-a-dozen hours ago; and now what was she?—The subject of a fraudulent imposture—the descendant of a menial, and a guilty menial,—and, if justice were done, penniless.

“Oh, folly! guilt! baseness! detestable meanness of human nature!—or of my own nature!” Grace was tempted to exclaim—“that this innocent victim of the sins of others, should excite a diminished interest—when she is so deeply, deeply to be pitied!”

But Grace might have her imagination perverted by infirmity;—her actions never.—The more she felt wrongly, the more she strove to act rightly, in this case—as in all others. So she went to visit the poor forlorn being, stripped at once and so cruelly of all the adventitious circumstances of life;—when, had the

child still been, what she had been thought a few hours ago—Mrs. Birchell, wearied to death as she was, would have gone straight to her own chamber.

She went up to the small bed where the little girl was peacefully slumbering, her nurse in a four-post hard by, treble locked in snoring repose beside her.

The little creature's pillow was trimmed and fringed with lace; her quilt was of Eider down; her curtains of fine muslin, lined with satin, drawn up with silken tassels.

The simplicity which Lady Emma had imposed upon herself and her child, had not been observed here,—perhaps, because the furniture was there already, and it would have cost money to have altered it—perhaps, because the matter had been overlooked—so these delicate and elegant associations which affect the imagination so strongly as connected with individuals, were all assembled about the child's alcove.

She lay sleeping there, her tiny arm clasped

round a very old and ugly doll, with a disfigured nose, a crushed cheek, and hair in that terrific state of disorder that well-worn wigs of hideous dolls are apt to assume. The doll was carefully wrapped in a shawl, which one hand of the little sleeper still held together. It seemed as if her last care before she fell asleep had been, to prevent this ancient favourite from taking cold.

The child's face, as she lay there, was a study in itself. Peace there was—for every child's face when asleep is peaceful; and yet, over the little brow a shadow hung—something earnest, fervent, serious! Not that cherub face of sleeping innocence which Grace was wont to contemplate with something approaching to rapture in her little foster-boy,—but a something more beautiful still.

The features were delicate and regular;—but in quite a different style from his. They had less of the waxy roundness, in him so surpassingly beautiful. They were almost too much formed for those of a child of her age:

the contour of her face approached too much to the oval—and the skin was pale and colourless, without, however, looking unhealthy. The hair, too, which had no curl, and hardly a wave in it, was brown, and cut nearly short about the head. Yet, was there a strange charm about the child. Mrs. Birchell thought she had never observed it before;—and she gazed with interest and tenderness;—but the longer she gazed, the more her heart began to fail her,—she fancied she discerned an undoubted likeness.

She stood there a long time, almost lost in her reflections, and, forgetting herself, the hour,—everything, but a sort of pitying regret,—and a dreamy trembling apprehension of what should happen next.

Her candle shook in her hand;—trying to recover it, she made a slight noise. Enough to disturb the child, but not the nurse.

Little Imogene opened her eyes for a moment, but closed them again immediately, only stretching out her arm to pull the cover over her dolly, murmuring,

“I hope you wont be cold, Dolly,”—and was in the land of dreams again.

“I have thought so much of the mother, I have scarcely observed the child,” was Mrs. Birchell’s reflection, as she entered her own room;—relieved by the interest she felt already springing up in her heart towards this hapless one.—“Now, the poor little thing ought to be considered before anyone—Poor little creature!—What a face of character and feeling! And what a fearful fate is hers!”

Not such was the sentiment with which the accession of the great heiress to her father’s vast possessions—the natural consequence, as every one supposed, of his death—was hailed by the numerous domestics and dependents of this large household.

The late conduct of Lady Emma, aided by the dark inuendoes and hints of Alice, had

been so utterly unintelligible, had appeared so capricious and unreasonable, and was so extremely in opposition to every taste and prejudice of the servant-world, that she had lately become extremely unpopular in the domestic empire.

Occupied with her own miserable thoughts, she had not the slightest perception of the change that had taken place in public opinion; perhaps, had she been aware of it, she would have heeded it the less, as what she lost in popularity, was more than repaid to her child.

Imogene, compelled to adopt the simplicity of attire and habits which Lady Emma had imposed upon herself, was regarded by the household in general, and by her own nurse more especially, as a victim to the most inexcusable and unaccountable tyranny. The little creature was too young to trouble herself much about such matters, yet she would sometimes innocently ask nurse, why she might not wear any of her pretty frocks? and say, 'she was so tired of rice-pudding.'

The Nurse was upon the whole prudent and conscientious in her way of dealing with this matter, and, much to her credit, she patiently forbore, in the child's presence, from making any comments upon these, to her most unnatural, proceedings—putting the subject aside as well as she could; but she repaid herself for this species of self-constraint, by giving vent to her disapprobation before the upper servants; and more especially in conversation with Alice; in whom she found something more than sympathy. It was, therefore, with a feeling approaching that which an heir experiences on falling suddenly into an inheritance, which will considerably raise his position among his fellow-men, and elevate him in his own opinion into quite a new creature,—that Mrs. Nurse had put her charge to bed upon the night of her father's death.

She had indulged herself in once more bringing out the muslin night-caps, trimmed with most delicate Valenciennes lace; and the night-dress, made up in the same fanciful man-

ner, with bows of pink ribbons; and had ventured upon her own responsibility to array the future mistress of Haughton in a style that harmonised with her ideas of what was due to that exalted station.

The little heiress had been far too sleepy to notice this change at the time, but when she awoke in the morning, as she usually did before Nurse, and lay there in her little bed, amusing herself as well as she could, and patiently waiting till Nurse should please to arise and get her up—she perceived that she had her beautiful things on again, and kept eyeing the bows of ribbon that adorned her tiny cap with much satisfaction, as she tried to fit it upon the head of the hideous old doll that lay beside her.

The Nurse turned in her bed.

“Nursy! Wont you wake?” said little Missy—“I’m tired of bed, and I want to ask you something.”

“Bless me! Miss Aubrey!”—starting up and looking at her watch—“if it ain’t eight

o'clock. Have you been lying awake long, my darling—Miss Aubrey, I mean?"

"Not very long—but I want to get up; and why, too, have I got my beauty cap on again?"

"Why, my darling—Miss Aubrey,—because it's proper, now."

"What do you mean by proper now?—Wasn't it proper yesterday?"

"Perhaps, it was—but things are altered since yesterday."

"I don't understand ——"

"No, you sweetest, innocent babe, how should you? But things *is* altered, and so you'll find—at least it shan't be my fault if you don't."

"I wish you'd get me up, Nursy, I *am* so tired of bed."

"Wait a little moment, I'll soon be ready, Miss Aubrey, and have you up in a trice."

"But why do you call me Miss Aubrey? It doesn't sound nice—I like Imogene—and darling, best."

“ Because you *are* Miss Aubrey, now—sure and certain, and for ever and aye. Neither Master nor Miss can ever come to turn you out, or share and share. Miss Aubrey you are—and Miss Aubrey you must be—let those gainsay it who will. And now you *are* Miss Aubrey, I hope there will some one or other be found who will see to your being treated as such—of which I will be the first, and do my part and portion to see you justiced, and not dressed and fed like a beggar’s brat—great heiress as you are—and none can prevent you.”

The little girl opened wide her eyes ; sitting up in her little bed, and staring fixedly at Nurse, who was hastily going on with her own toilette, while she thus delivered herself, more as if she were talking apart than addressing the child ; which, indeed, she was ;—venting her feelings without regarding the little listener, who, in mute attention, devoured every word as it fell.

“ Great what ! — Heir-ess !—What’s that ?

I'm not great—I'm very little, still. Look, what little arms I have—why, they're not bigger than Miss Dolly's arms, I do declare—I wish I knew what you were talking about, Nursy. Miss Aubrey I am? I don't like Miss Aubrey. I'm Imogene—I like to be Imogene."

"Oh! but you'll like better to be Miss Aubrey—wont you? and ride in a coach and four, and have two footmen with powdered hair, and canes in their hands, hanging behind! and rosettes and ribbons as long as my arm at the horses' heads—as Mrs. Aubrey, that last was—not Lady Emma, I mean—used to have. It's a grand thing, I can tell you, to be a great heiress. There's no end of the feasts, and the bonnets and the toys . . . and, bless me! Miss Aubrey—you must part with that nasty old doll!—It's not for such as you to play with such a filthy old thing as that."

Imogene hugged her doll to her honest little heart;

"But I love Dolly—Nursy—because every-

body's cross to her, and calls her ugly, but me."

"Oh! but you mustn't give into such fancies, now.—You'll have lots of beautiful wax dolls, now—and you *must* throw that dreadful thing away to the dogs "

"Dolly," said the little girl, looking into the face of her broken-cheeked old friend—"don't you be afraid—never mind what Nursy says—I won't let you be thrown to the dogs—that I won't—and I won't love the beautifullest wax doll that ever was born in the world better than you.—No, *that* I won't.—Go, lie you there, and don't be afraid, and I'll get you up and dress you as soon as Nursy has done me."

'One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.'

The heart of Nurse swelled—

"And ain't it a heart of gold?" she said, as she lifted her little treasure from the bed, with a kiss so honest—that, for a moment, all the visions of her own and Miss Aubrey's grandeur were forgotten.

As the dressing went on, the child resumed her prattle.

“I want you, Nursy, to tell me what’s come—that it’s so different—Mamma never came to kiss me last night.—I know she didn’t—she thinks I’m asleep—but I always know somehow when Mamma comes.—Why did not she come last night?”

“Poor little dear!—Well, you must be told some time or other—Mamma was crying—because, you know . . .”

“Crying—poor Mamma—she’s often crying—but she kisses me—”

“Ah! but . . . this was a great deal more than common crying—your Papa—”

“Papa!—Papa!—dear Papa!—He doesn’t cry—and he doesn’t speak to me much—but I love him, *so*—”

“How?”

“So big!—so much!—more than Dolly—more than Mamma—more than everybody—”

Nurse turned her head away, and stole her hand to her eyes.

"I didn't often hear you speak so of your Papa—little Missy," she presently said.

"No—because Mamma said, 'Hush!'—when I spoke of Papa—I thought I mustn't."

"You'd be very sorry not to see your Papa again."

"Not see Papa again!"—with a faint cry.
"Oh! but I *will* see Papa again!"

"So you shall, you little darling! when you go to God in heaven."

"Heaven? It's up there—a long, long way. I'll go to Papa, after breakfast, my own self—and take him some flowers out of my own—own garden—that's what I'll do, Nursy."

"No, poor little dear, you mustn't."

"Why mustn't?—and why do you say, '*poor* little dear?'"

"Because—because—your Papa's dead—and that's what makes you Miss Aubrey."

"Dead!—what's dead?"

"Put in a coffin and buried."

"What's coffin!—what's buried!—what's dead!—I want to go to Papa—I *will* go to Papa."

She began to stamp with her little foot, as if she intended to be naughty.

“ Oh, don’t do so—don’t be naughty, Miss Imogene. You should go to your Papa, pretty dear—and I would take you—but he’s gone away for ever and ever—he’s gone to God—you mustn’t be sorry, little darling—it’s best for him, poor gentleman, *that* it is.”

The little girl stood like one almost stupified with amazement. Her mind was overpowered and bewildered with ideas that she could most imperfectly comprehend ; but, gradually, some notion of the truth seemed to dawn upon the infant mind ; the tears slowly gathered to her eyes, then began to roll silently down her cheeks. She cried, not as the child cries, but as the man weeps.

“ I want to know about Mamma. Is she gone away, too, for ever and ever—up into the skies ?”

“ No, my precious ; she’s in her own room.”

“ Why didn’t she come, and kiss little Moggie, last night ? Are you certain, sure, she’s not gone up in the sky, too ?”

“Yes, darling, certain, sure.”

“Is she crying about Papa?”

“Yes, dear, crying sadly, I dare say,” the conscientious Nurse replied—uttering what she only half believed; but to have the child imagine that her mother did not weep for her father would have been, according to her ideas, a thing too terrible—and I think she was right.

“I must go to her,” said the little girl, hurrying on the frock, into the sleeves of which she was just thrusting her slender arms.

Nurse said nothing.

“I must go and comfort Mamma,” said the little one—“make haste. Oh, Dolly! you must go too—I can’t stop to dress you.” She laid hold of her dolly, pressed it to her little heart, gave her hand to Nurse, and began pulling her towards the nursery-door.

“Why don’t you come, Nursy?—why don’t you come?”

“Suppose my lady shouldn’t be awake?”

“Oh, she will, or she wouldn’t be crying.

If you won't come, I'll go by my own self—I can get to Mamma's room, all by own self, now."

Nurse was obliged to give way, though half afraid to appear, unsummoned, before her lady. The conduct of Lady Emma, during the few hours which had elapsed since her husband's death, seeming to all the household more inexplicable than ever—more especially to Nurse, jealous as to everything which concerned her little darling. Above all, deeply had Nurse resented what she thought the unfeeling neglect of the night before.

However, the importunities of the child were irresistible, and, holding her by the hand, she led her to her mother's door, and knocked.

"Who's that?" was responded in a somewhat impatient voice.

"It's Nurse and little Moggie," was the answer, in the sweet, bird-like tones of little Imogene—"I want to come to you, Mamma."

"Come in."

She had risen from her bed, for she could

not sleep, and was sitting in her long, white dressing-gown, negligently thrown back in a large arm-chair—looking like the ghost of herself. Her face was so colourless—her eyes so dead—the whole countenance ghastly, as that of Lazarus, when he rises from among the dead, in that awful picture of Haydon's.

“Little child,” she said—she still was so haunted by that feeling, the worst of all her strange and varied sufferings, that the child was somehow become a stranger to her—“Little child, what are you come here for?”

“It's not little child—it's little Moggie. Papa's gone to the sky, Mammy, dear—and little Moggie and dolly's come to comfort you.”

She came in, carrying the old doll pressed to her bosom, went up to her mother, and laid her tiny, slender hand upon that of Lady Emma, which was resting upon the arm of the chair—“We're so sorry—so sorry. But you must'nt cry—because poor Papa's gone up there—and Nursy told me, as we came along, he'll be very happy—and we must be glad.”

“Did Nurse tell you to come to me?”

“No; I came of my own self—self—because you know little Moggie is your comfort—and your little own—so love me, Mamma, love me—why don’t you love me?”

“Oh!—I do!—I do!—I will!—I will!” cried poor Emma, catching the little pleader in her arms, and almost drowning her with tears, which now burst forth abundantly and wholesomely—and her better heart, like the green-buds after a shower, sprung to life again, as they flowed—“What a wretch—what a double wretch I am!”—and again she covered her with kisses and embraces.

The little child responded to all this in a way little children rarely do; but her sympathies were beyond her years. She kept kissing and soothing her mother, for her little bosom was swelling with compassion. Children are usually terrified and confounded by the expression of passionate emotion, even when shown in the transports of affection to themselves; but this little girl was already old by her

heart, though such an innocent, guileless little creature in every way.

She fondled and comforted her mother by every means in her power ; at last, the deluge of tears ceased, Emma recovered herself, and placed the child upon her knee. The little head, as of wont, was fondly laid against her bosom—but, oh, horror of horrors !—the heart which had yielded to the first gush of emotion—again with a strange, unnatural caprice, felt hardened—cold as stone—as the passion subsided—

“ Was it her child ?—Oh, no—it was Alice’s child—Not an Aubrey—but an impostor.”

She hated herself—she pressed the little delicate cheek against her breast ; but the warmth within was gone. It was as if the poor little girl were herself the changeling—so capricious, unnatural, and out of calculation, are the conflicting feelings, the moral contradictions, which attend upon the consequences of a heavy crime.

You must not hate poor Emma. The feeling was involuntary.

It was the climax of her misery, to be conscious of it. She will try to vanquish it—she will most sedulously conceal it—but Alice has her full revenge. The happiness in her child is shipwrecked with the rest.

All has gone down together.

CHAPTER III.

Fold his hands, so waxen white,
Close the pale lids o'er his eyes;
To his kindred's burial place
Bear him.

MRS. ACTON TINDAL.

THE funeral was over.

The will had been opened, before it took place, by Mr. Birchell's desire. He said it might probably contain some directions as to the funeral—and, in the perplexity of Lady Emma's mind, as to what in any way, under the circumstances, ought to be done; he thought it would be best at once to adhere to Mr. Aubrey's wishes upon the subject, if the expression of any such, had been left behind him.

There were no directions of this nature, but it was found that the whole management of the late William Aubrey's affairs, and the sole care of his child's pecuniary interests, were left to a certain Mr. Glenroy, who was appointed sole executor, and also joint-guardian with Lady Emma.

Who was this Mr. Glenroy?

He resided, as it appeared, in the north of Scotland—and, Lady Emma now recollected, was one of the friends her husband had visited during his late absence from home; but she had never seen him, had rarely heard her husband mention him, and felt not very agreeably surprised to find herself thus placed in so intimate a relation with a perfect stranger.

It was necessary, however, immediately to write to him, and take his directions as to the manner in which the funeral was to be conducted. Had Lady Emma followed her own wishes, this would have been in the most quiet and private manner possible—and she had begun to give some orders to that effect; but Mr.

Glenroy's letter, when it arrived, at once altered every disposition.

The letter began by lamenting that a very severe illness, under which he was labouring, rendered it utterly impossible for Mr. Glenroy to travel to Haughton in time to pay the last respects to a dear and honoured friend—but, that Lady Emma might depend upon seeing him as soon as it was possible for him to set forwards. With respect to the funeral, he said, that he thought he should best consult what would doubtless be Lady Emma's wishes—and what was due to the memory of the departed—by directing that everything should be carried out exactly upon the scale adopted by his deceased friend upon occasion of his father's obsequies. The late Mr. Aubrey had been carried to the grave, with a pomp which some might have thought superfluous; but he himself was of the old school, and took pleasure in honouring the dead—and he felt this more especially when they belonged to a high grade in society, and were distinguished for

their personal virtues and accomplishments, as his late friend had been.

Mr. Aubrey, he added, would, of course, be laid by his father's side, in the family vault—where, as he concluded, Lady Emma would wish a space should be left where, in due course of years, she might take her place beside him.

Mr. Glenroy's letter was stiff and formal, not to say cold—but extremely polite and respectful in its terms. It was plain that he had not the remotest suspicion of what had lately been going on at Haughton, still less of the dreadful discovery which had plunged the relations of this vexed and unhappy family into such inextricable confusion.

“And must it really be so? Must the alien, the usurper—the imposed son of a dependant—the son who was no son—the brother who was no brother—be carried to his grave with all that pomp and circumstance of woe which belonged to a station to which he had no title?”

“Must this imposture be thus connived at in silence—Nay, would not this very connivance

be a positive support of wrong? Would it not increase the difficulty of proving the fact and restoring the inheritance to the rightful heir?"

"It is a hideous deceit! It is the acting out a pompous and enormous lie!—it is impossible—it must not be!" cried Emma, in her agony.

"My dear friend," said Grace, "do not torment yourself in this manner—there is no remedy for it—nothing is in your power to do—and with the power you lose the responsibility. It is impossible, till Mr. Glenroy arrives in person, to enter upon the subject which presses upon us in this fearful manner. Things must, till then, take their course—Submit to necessity—and rejoice that necessity is laid upon you. How painful the task would have been, if, unhappily, the arrangement of these matters had rested with you. Dear Emma, be reasonable."

"I wish to be reasonable, I am sure—I wish to do right—but the weight of this hideous secret is too oppressive—Everything which I do and say under the misapprehension that ex-

ists around me, seems to me like treachery—Oh! how little do people know when they commit a crime, the numbers that may be involved in its consequences.—That poor little girl!—That loving, affectionate, little child, to have all my feelings towards her de-naturalized.—It is too shocking!—Yet I can *not* help it—Every mark of respect which she receives from the servants around us—and you know how ready such sort of people are to bow down before the idol, upon an occasion like this—excites a bitter feeling of indignation and contemptuous pity upon my side.—If they did but know . . . And then, the poor unconscious object of all this reverence!—who receives it with so much simple wonder—How can I look upon her but as a mere pretence? a poor puppet, dressed up for a moment in borrowed robes—when she is, in fact, stripped of everything! Reduced to what?—to be a servant's child!—one of themselves—less than one of themselves! because descended—not from honest industry—but black and despicable crime—Oh, I could

hate myself and her—I am very, very miserable—”

Grace was silent.—She looked at Emma with a sort of mournful wonder—

“Is this Emma?” at last she said.

“No, it is no longer Emma,” replied the poor thing, bitterly. “I am changed like all the rest.—The wife of an impostor—disgraced and humbled.—The baseness to which I have been kin, infects me too—I am—I don’t know what—and am changed I don’t know how—Grace, you will despise me—I cannot help that. How the world will laugh and hiss—as I and this poor child descend from the pedestal to which we have been so unjustly elevated, and sink into the obscurity which belongs to the wife and daughter of the Gamekeeper’s son!—I shall feel it—I cannot help feeling it, and you will despise me personally, Grace, for bearing my unheard-of affliction, in so unworthy a way.—So that I shall lose everything at once—and, with the rest, your love and esteem—and my own self-respect.”

“The situation is trying, but we must have courage—and, above all, we must have submission.—The issues of things are unknown to us—but we know in Whose hands all things are. Obedience in this dark and unintelligible world—unhesitating obedience and submission to the higher Hand—is not only our first duty—but our best wisdom. We are but of yesterday, and know nothing.—Why things are—as they are, it is vain to inquire—but He is everything—or He is nothing.—Life is a school, Events are our lessons.—Let us take them so.—Let us submit at once cheerfully, and without holding back any portion of the heart, to the inevitable—for the inevitable is *His*.—You do not know, dear Lady Emma—in what form this particular distress may bear upon you—what peculiar exercise of virtue it may demand in future;—at present it is that of patience under the weight of an almost insupportable secret—but this *must* be borne, until Mr. Glenroy arrives—When he comes—we shall have the assistance of a sensible man

in deciding upon the next step ; and do let us be thankful that there is some one who has a right to a very influential voice in our proceedings.—What you would have done,—if you had been left to decide alone, and with only myself and Mr. Birchell to advise you?—It really makes one tremble to think.”

“ But this funeral !—So conducted !—It *is* a step—it *is* a fact—and all in the wrong direction.—What will the world think when it learns, that I suffered these invitations to be sent, and all this hideous, sickening funeral ceremony to be prepared, knowing all the time what he was, and what I was—He a robber and an impostor,—and I an accessory to his sin.—Oh, Grace ! Grace ! what shall I do ? ”

“ Bear it,”—said Grace, firmly.

“ And the child ? ”

“ The same with the child. It is impossible—it would be very wrong, Mr. Birchell says, in a matter of this weight, to proceed hastily, and that the man, your late husband ” (Emma shivered)—“ has selected, is the one who

alone ought first to be consulted.—I repeat it, you must wait with patience till he comes.”

And so the day of the funeral arrived.

The preparations for it, under the directions received from Mr. Glenroy, were upon a really ostentatious scale.—Such funeral rites had been the custom in the family of Aubrey ;—and upon this occasion they surpassed even those that the piety, the remorse, or the pride of William had offered to his father’s memory.

There was not a dependant of the whole household who had not felt for their master during the late scenes that had taken place in the family ;—and of which, as is the manner in all households that ever yet were, they were perfectly aware.—The conduct of Lady Emma—the motive for which being the only part of the business to which they had not the slightest clue—had appeared to them as the excess of unfeeling caprice. Such sentiments were fostered in every way by Mrs. Craven, whose aversion, not to say hatred, of Lady Emma, strengthened every day—and the affecting

death of the Master—attributed by all to its true cause—a broken heart, filled every honest mind with a mixture of indignation and pity, which rendered Lady Emma more unpopular than ever.—Her coldness in the matter of the funeral—a matter to which people of that class attach a sacred importance—looking upon the due celebration of it as, in truth, with them it mostly is—as a pious sacrifice to the memory of the dead—was regarded with a sentiment approaching to horror;—there was not a dependant among them who was not anxious, as far as in him or her lay, to atone, in his several capacity, to their master's memory, for the implied affront.

The orders dispatched by Mr. Glenroy were received with enthusiastic approbation. That gentleman was immediately pronounced to be one of the right sort,—and every heart was united in the desire to see his directions carried out to their full extent.

The steward, to whom the arrangement of the whole was confided, had thought it only

respectful to apply to Lady Emma, and ask whether she had any particular wishes upon the subject, which she would desire to have attended to.

“I have received a letter from Mr. Glenroy this morning, my Lady—as concerns the funeral”—speaking in a lower voice.

“So I understand”—she answered coldly—“I have heard from him myself upon the subject.”

“Doubtless, my lady—and I suppose everything is ordered as you would have wished.”

“Not as *I* should have wished,”—she said—“but Mr. Glenroy has not thought proper to consult me.”

“I am very sorry, my lady, if your feelings”

“Say no more about it—Mr. Glenroy has given his orders: that is enough.”

“But is there nothing you would like to have arranged in any particular way, my lady—Mr. Glenroy desires me to consult you as to the details—though he has decided, himself, upon

the scale on which things are to be conducted. Eight horses ; twelve mourning coaches, with six horses each ; ten bearers ; all the tenants in deep mourning on horseback ; all the men from the works, men and boys in deep mourning, on foot, to follow four-and-four. It will be a noble sight—a finer sight even than the funeral of the late Mr. Aubrey, because the tenants are increased in number ; and the men at the works and mines more than doubled. The expense of clothing the whole will be great,—but Mr. Glenroy has ordered me upon this occasion to spare nothing. There will not be a dry eye upon the occasion. My master, the late Mr. Aubrey, was universally beloved and respected. It will be a noble funeral”—repeated the steward, warming as he went on with the subject.

A cold and bitter smile, so slight as to be scarcely perceptible, was upon Lady Emma's lips, as she listened without interrupting him,—when he stopped, all she said was—

“You have your orders—I have none to give.”

The steward retired,—his heart swelling within him, resolved that he, at least, would not fail in what was due to his late master.

The body was laid in a coffin covered with crimson velvet ; a pall with the escutcheon of the family embroidered in silver on the corners, and bordered with a deep, rich silken fringe, was thrown over it ; the room was hung with black ; huge silver candlesticks, supporting enormous waxen tapers, gave a lurid light ;—it was more like a princely lying-in-state, than the sacred silence and modesty of that chamber in which a private individual lies dead.

And yet, there were no great ones who came to visit it—but the tenants and their wives and children arrived from far and near, and the iron-founders, and the miners, and their wives and families, were every one admitted to gape and stare in a sort of stupid admiration. In silence the long, long train of dependants ascended the stairs, with stealthy steps, as if afraid to let a foot-fall be heard, in the profound stillness which

enwrapped the mansion,—and tears were in the eyes of some, and were running down the care-worn cheeks of toil-worn women and wives, whilst children with eyes open wide with wonder and curiosity, stood grave and awe-struck, for the great master to whom they all looked up, was gone.

It should have been the mother who held the, as it was supposed, heiress of this enormous wealth and influence up to the window, to watch the crowd as it defiled in one long line through a side court and gateway of the castle. The mother should have been there to have told her child why and wherefore they were come, and to have impressed the infant mind with a foretaste of the duties devolving upon her—but no mother did this.

In Lady Emma's eyes, the poor child had no part whatsoever in what was going on,—but had a far different lesson to learn : a lesson which she felt every day that passed was only rendering more painful and difficult.

But Nurse had her own ideas upon the subject.

That Lady Emma, in her opinion, grievously neglected her duty, in not taking this opportunity of making an impression upon the young heiress,—teaching her to honour and imitate her father,—was no reason why she should do the same. She had carried the child into the room where her father's coffin with all its splendid accompaniments lay.

“Do you know where you are, Miss Aubrey, dear?” she said, as the little girl whom she held in her arms clung, half curious, half frightened, to her neck.

“No—what's that great pink thing?—and the black cover over it?”

“That's your dear papa's—Mr. Aubrey's coffin—he's asleep in it.”

“No—its not a bed—he's not asleep. It's not like a bed.”

“Look at it, love—you cannot understand it now. Isn't it very grand and beautiful?”

“It looks dark and bright—things shine. But it's very black—I'd rather go away—let me go, Nurse.”

“That’s your father’s coffin, Miss Aubrey—that, all crimson velvet and silver—and that all black velvet and silver is called his pall—And all those beautiful candles there is lighted for him—and it’s put because your papa was a very rich gentleman—as you are now a little rich lady, my jewel . . . but you must mind this thing, your papa was a very good gentleman, and very kind to those as was poor and in want—and you’ll be that too—won’t you, precious?”

She afterwards took the child to a window, from which she could see the long line of people coming and going from their visit to the lying-in-state.

“What quantities!—and quantities!—and quantities of people, and boys, and little girls, too!—what are they doing, Nursy?—There’s some of them crying, I do declare.”

“Yes, Miss Aubrey—some of them is crying—for they’re coming from what I showed you this morning before the doors was opened.—All these loads of people are come nobody knows how far.”

“What to do?”

“To see your papa’s coffin—because he was a very fine rich gentleman, as you are going to be a very fine rich lady—you may have gold frocks if you like it; and be as grand as the Princess Royal herself—and so, please the pigs, I hope in good time to see you.”

“Did papa wear gold coats?—I never saw him but in black coats.”

“No, dear—because he didn’t love to be fine himself—but one thing he did love—and that was to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry; and that was better than a gold coat, precious, wasn’t it?”

“Were all these people very hungry, sometimes?”

“Yes, very, very hungry, now and then, when times was bad.”

“What’s times bad?”

“Nothing for people to eat.”

“And papa gave the people something to eat?”

“Aye, that he did.”

“And he didn’t wear a gold coat.”

“No, dear—He liked to give the gold to buy people things to eat.”

“I’ll not have gold frocks,”—said the child—
“I’ll give people to eat—when I’m like papa.”

“Oh ! you little angel !—and so you shall—
for you will be like your papa—you are going
to be as rich, and as fine, and as great a lady,
as ever there is in this land, be the other who
she may.”

“I don’t quite understand, Nursy—but
shall I have something to give the people to
eat ?”

“Loads and loads.”

“Legs of mutton—and great pieces of
bread—and puddings, too ?”

“Heaps of them.”

“I am so glad—Are the people hungry
now ?”

“I dare say they’re hungry enough—for
they’ve many of them walked a great way.”

“Where’s my legs of mutton and pieces of
bread?—I want some.”

“ Oh ! you darling innocent !—you’ve not got ’em yet—you’ll not have ’em till you’re bigger—and till Mr. Glenroy comes.”

“ Who’s Mr. Glenroy ?—I want some now.”

“ Well, dear, you must wait a bit—look what a many they are !”

“ They’ll want a many legs of mutton and slices of bread ;—I hope they’ll get some.”

“ Yes, dear—Mr. Reitson, the steward, has seen to that. Every one of them as chooses to call at the South Lodge can have a slice of bread and cheese and a draught of beer ”

“ That’s good of Mr. Reitson—I love Mr. Reitson.”

“ It’s Mr. Glenroy ordered it.—He was afraid the people might be hungry.”

“ Good Mr. Glenroy—I like Mr. Glenroy.”

“ Mamma,” said the child, who had been sitting for some time silent at the feet of her mother, who was seated upon the sofa, reading—“ What do you think Nursy says ?”

“I am sure I don’t know—but you must not mind what Nursy says—mind what I say.”

“Mamma, she says, I’m got a very great, rich, grand lady—as rich as the Queen—but I’m not to have a gold frock as the Queen has—but a black frock instead—because I want to be like papa—and I’m going to feed hungry people.”

“Nurse talks a great deal of stupid nonsense—you’re not going to be any such thing—I wish Nurse would hold her tongue—I shall be forced to send her away, if she does not,” said Lady Emma, impatiently.

“Send Nurse away!—” cried the child, turning pale, and lifting up at her mother an appalled, scared look ;—such as during some of Lady Emma’s inexplicable proceedings of the last few weeks, the bewildered little girl had at times cast upon her—“Oh, mammy! mammy! don’t!—pray don’t!”

“Well! well!—be quiet—Don’t look frightened out of your wits!—Only, you must pro-

mise me, you won't mind a word that Nurse says, for I'm afraid she's a very foolish woman—and I'm sure she does not know what she's talking about."

"But I like to be a fine rich lady, like the Queen," said the child; "because then, Nurse says, I can buy legs of mutton and lumps of bread, and feed hungry people—I wanted some directly, but she says that won't be till Mr. Glenroy comes, and I'm bigger."

"You want to be rich and great, like the Queen—what to do, do you say?" asked the mother, her eye softening.

"Feed hungry people.—Be like papa—and wear a black coat, and feed hungry people."

The tears swelled to Lady Emma's eyes. Once more the heart of stone began to melt—the human heart of flesh to beat.

"Is that what you want to be rich and great for, little child?" she said

"Yes—*that* I do ——"

"Like your papa—did you say?"

“Yes, Nursy says so. There’s quantities, and quantities, and quantities of people came here—men and women, and little boys and little girls—and she showed ’em me—and they all looked sorry; and Nurse says, it’s because they were come to see that grand black room—something about papa—and they were all so sorry—because papa’s gone to Heaven—and because when papa was rich, he wouldn’t like wearing a grand gold coat—but he liked feeding hungry people; and people are very, very hungry sometimes, she says, because they can’t get nothing at all to eat; and papa has legs of mutton, and pieces of bread, instead of gold coats—and he gives them to the hungry people—and they’re so glad—and I’m so glad—and they love him very much—and cry about him—and so ought I—but I can’t cry about him, because I’m too little.”

Lady Emma clasped the prattler to her heart. The child hung about, nestling her little head against her mother’s bosom—and kissing the folds of her dress.

“Love me, mamma,” she whispered. “You don’t love poor little Moggie.”

“Does Nurse tell you that?”—said Lady Emma—drawing a little back.

“No.”

“No!—who then?”

“Me tells myself,” whispered the little child, in a voice so low as scarcely to be heard.

Lady Emma’s heart smote her once more. And yet, even then, she could not clasp the poor little thing again fondly to her bosom, and kiss her, and console the aching heart with caresses.

A shadow—a figure—the detested figure of Alice Craven seemed to rise like the spectre of evil between them. She disengaged herself, though with great gentleness, from poor little Moggie’s clasping arms, and said—

“You must not talk in this way, Imogene—you must not think I do not love you.”

“Mustn’t I?—then I won’t.”

“It makes me sorry to hear you talk in that way.”

“I won’t make you sorry—I’ll be sorry all by myself.”

“But you mustn’t be sorry—you have nothing to make you sorry. You must not fancy foolish things, and then you won’t have anything to be sorry about, little girl,” said the mother, patting her cheek.

The child said nothing—but stooped down to pick up her doll, which had fallen from her lap, when she started up to embrace her mother. She busied herself in smoothing the rumpled frock; and then examined, with considerable attention, one of the arms, which was slightly injured by the fall—after which, she lifted up her little stool to carry it to its place, as the custom was, before she left the room.

“What—are you going away?” asked her mother.

“I want to go to Nursy—I can open the door myself . . . self.”

“What—are you tired of being with me?”

The child was silent.

“You don’t like being with me.”

One wistful, expressive glance;—and her eyes were bent down upon her dolly’s face again.

“You love dolly better than me.”

Silence—but the doll pressed close to the little bosom.

“Well, go away, if you like it—I never keep any one who doesn’t want to stay with me.”

Two big tears, and the little breast heaving.

“Yes, go away, go,”—cried the wretched Emma—“go away—poor, poor little girl! But, Imogene—but, little Moggie! don’t think I am unkind—I can’t help it—I don’t mean to be unkind.”

But, at the words, little Moggie, the child had fallen down at her mother’s feet, and had kissed the hem of her garment.

Lady Emma felt as if her heart was being torn in pieces. Every demonstration of feeling—every look of this child, only the more forcibly brought to her recollection her pas-

sionate progenitors—She fancied every expression and gesture to be the expression and the gestures of the race from which she sprung—and every thing of the kind seemed only the more to increase the sense of unnatural alienation, which tortured her.

She could not feign—to feign was impossible with Emma. Sincerity was the one strong virtue of her character. A great and sacred quality, but wanting so many others to give it the full value.

But she did what she could—she lifted the little worshipper from the carpet, placed her upon her lap again—and with her eyes full of tears, said—

“Little Moggie—can understand—papa is dead—and I am very unhappy—and when people are very unhappy, it feels as if they couldn’t love and be kind. They are so very unhappy. And so I can’t kiss and play with little Moggie as I used to do—because I’m so very, very unhappy;”—and the tears now ran fast down her cheeks—“and so she

mustn't be sorry—because, though I don't show it much—I think little Moggie—is a very, very dear, good little thing—and I hope she'll always be a good little thing, and then God will love her—for He loves and cares very much for poor little children who have no papa. He has promised he'll take care of them—and He always keeps his promise;—and you must try to think of this, when poor mamma is very, very unhappy, and can't be kind to you—and don't mind, little Moggie, what Nursy says to you about being rich and great, like the Queen. It's nonsense—nobody else is rich and great, like the Queen. There's only one Queen in this country—and, besides, you must not think about being rich—or wish to be rich. God does not like people to wish much about being rich—and he does not love people one bit better for being rich—only foolish people do *that*—so don't think about it, little Moggie; and if Nursy talks about it, tell her she mustn't—and don't you mind her; for, whether little Moggie is rich or not

doesn't matter—she shall manage, somehow, to feed hungry people.”

And with that she kissed her—and sent the little child quite content and happy away.

There was something in the tone of this last speech and more especially the repetition of the endearing epithet, ‘little Moggie’—which answered to the yearnings of the infant heart.

And Emma felt more calm and peaceful, after this, than she had done since the awful evening. The terms upon which she was placed, as regarded her child, were altered; but they had assumed a truthful and definite form. To be good to her—if she could not worship her, as she once had done—in that way she would, and she could, love her.

Note.—The Editor of Aubrey has made a mistake with regard to William Aubrey's funeral.—It was that of Alice alone, that was conducted with so much simplicity.—With regard to the other, things were as I have related.

J. L.

CHAPTER IV.

Dread Gods ! I know these things shall surely be !
But other, wilder whispers throng mine ears.

W. C. BENNETT.

GRACE came to Haughton that evening.

“I am so glad you are come, Grace—I have had a painful, and yet a consoling morning. That little child is a very interesting being——”

“So I always thought her,” said Grace ;
“and if we were only actuated by the very most ordinary Christian feeling, we should, both of us, take far more interest in her than

ever we did before—I am ashamed of my own heart.”

“So should I be of mine, if I were not weary of contests with my heart,” said poor Emma, in the wearied tone of one quite worn out with internal conflicts;—“when will the time come?—Will it ever come? when my feelings may take their natural course. What has life been to me but a pretence—an effort after that, which it was my duty to feel, and which I could not feel—I ought to have loved my husband when I did not—to have hated him when I could not—to have tolerated Alice Craven when I hated her—to forgive her now, when my whole soul hardens against her—and now, most horrible of all, my child!—This unnatural, this almost insane alienation!—For she *is* my child—and yet how is it that I feel as if she were scarcely any longer mine—as if she belonged to aliens and strangers, not to me.—Oh! this is a dreadful, and an unpardonable feeling; and now my whole life must be one struggle to conceal that which I

ever must and shall feel—and to affect a love which has been driven, as if by an avenging angel, from my breast, in atonement for the dreadful wrong in which I have so innocently shared.—Oh! what a strange, strange thing the human heart is!—And my life, as I look back upon it!—What a labyrinth of confusion —‘a tale told by an idiot, full of noise and fury, signifying nothing.’—Oh Grace! dear Grace! what a shipwrecked creature I am!”

“There is a rock to anchor against, dear Emma, and, sooner or later, you will find, as thousands before you have found, that there is one—and one only haven from the storms and tempests of life;—As to your painful feelings with regard to your child, believe me they are only the effect of the nervous excitement you have gone through, and the severe shock you have received. Time is necessary to let this tumult of the spirits subside—when the hurry of this dreary week is over, you will feel quieter—and will have time to collect your thoughts, and decide what is your duty to

do ; and then your affections will take their natural course once more."

Emma shook her head.

"It is dreadful to begin this new life by the acting of a fearful lie!"—she said.

"There is no remedy—Try not to think of it——"

"I will bury myself in the deepest cellar of this vast wilderness of a house, rather than witness what I think so false—and, therefore, so wrong."

"You will stay quietly here, I hope.—It is not necessary that you should do anything singular or extravagant—in no case would you be expected to appear. Shut the double-door which separates you from the house, and you will hear nothing."

"I shall hear the lumbering roll of this detestable procession. They tell me the carriage of every gentleman in the county will be there to do honour—to whom? Geoffrey Craven, the gamekeeper's son!"

"Oh, Lady Emma! In the sacred presence of death, too!"

“Death is truth—It is the great, the only truth.—No pretences and deception about that.—Oh, Grace, to have this hideous lie throw its shadow over even death !”

It seemed impossible to turn her thoughts from viewing the subject in this irritated and painful manner. Mrs. Birchell determined to endeavour to divert her mind to another subject, which, though equally painful, would be different.—

“You will have to consider, when this is over, the steps that in justice ought to be taken as regards the little girl.”

“There is not much consideration required, I should think, as to that,” replied Emma, with a coldness almost approaching to hardness—“It will only be necessary to declare the facts—That I was the wife—and that she is the child of an impostor and a beggar ; and then yield up all the stolen inheritance that can be recovered, to the rightful heir, whoever that may be ; and so retire to that penury and disgrace, which are the portion of those who

have bound themselves up with, and shared in, the profits of great crimes."

"But, we have but very slender and imperfect evidence of the fact."

"Oh! there is not the slightest doubt of the fact, now the eyes are opened—There is enough in the faces themselves to assure anyone who chooses to see, of the fact—I wonder it never struck me before. The child belongs to Alice Craven, not to me—one would think there was not even a drop of my blood stirring in her veins."

"She is like her father——"

"And her father?—Who is he?"

"Nay; that is the very matter in question—who is he?—The whole story seems so romantic, so incredible—I find myself already staggering in my belief—and Mr. Birchell, who is not influenced by the impression that last awful scene made upon us, is very much inclined to question the whole story."

"*He* may—but I don't.—A thousand minute circumstances unremembered at the time,

but well remembered now, confirm it. And if they did not—the likeness is in itself enough!”

“But, dear Lady Emma—there are others to be satisfied besides ourselves.—Mr. Birchell says—that this being the case of an infant, your convictions and your renunciations would be of little or no avail.”

“The child, then, is to stand between me and what I know to be justice.—The child, then, is to be made and to make me an accessory after the fact.”

“Justice must and will be done to the child, as well as to others. The law, my husband says, will not suffer her to be robbed of her inheritance upon trifling grounds”

“Oh, I see how it will be! The usual thing.—The law will interfere to defeat the claims of justice.—The descendant of the game-keeper will reap the rightful inheritance of the child of the true heir—an inheritance obtained by double crimes—black with deceit—black with perjury and treachery.—I see very well how it will all end.”

“Dear Emma! be patient—”

“So I will when justice is done.”

“Consider how awful it would be to rob your own child unjustly.”

“It never can be unjustly—Even if William Craven had been Mr. Aubrey’s son—which now I know he was not,—he gained the inheritance by a mean and base deception—and that child of his has no more right to it than you have.”

“Ah, Emma! how bitterly you think and speak.”

“Do I—yes, I know I do.—There are situations which turn every feeling to bitterness—but let justice be done—only let justice be done—and then I shall be my natural self again.—Then I shall be able to love Alice Craven’s child—when, if she were the usurping heiress, I should almost hate her.”

“Oh!”—cried Grace, in a deprecating voice, as if warding off something too horrible to be acknowledged.

“I should—I should—I should try to hide

it—I should take up my burden.—Yes, Grace, I should pretend to love the child—I must pretend—I should deceive everybody but my own dry, desert, alienated heart—but what does that matter?”

In this incoherent, excited manner she continued for some time to talk; but at length she became calmer, and listened to Mrs. Birchell's plans. The main part of which consisted in the proposal to lay the whole of the circumstances before two lawyers of the highest reputation that were to be found, and listen to their opinion, before taking any irrevocable step—or making the story public, until future proceedings had been well and carefully considered.

The idea of a serious appeal of this nature, pacified Lady Emma, for the present. Fully persuaded as she was, herself, of the justice of her views, she felt not the least doubt as to what the decision of the counsel must be. She had a sort of instinctive dread of the doubtful result of a public trial, with all its pleadings,

for right side or wrong—but an appeal to two well-instructed men, in their chambers—who could have no interest in distorting the truth, or defeating the ends of justice, seemed all that she could desire; and, strengthened by such opinions, she felt she should have no difficulty in carrying out the course she had already resolved to adopt,—that, in short, of stripping herself and her daughter at once of possessions acquired by such a fearful, double injustice. Further than this she did not at present go. What they were to do afterwards, she would not at this moment allow herself to think of.

Upon one thing alone she was steadily resolved—to do justice at any cost—and to suffer nothing to weaken this resolution, neither the remonstrances of friends—nor certain hesitations from within. Those hesitations of fear—those questionings of interest—those misgivings, as to the absolute nature, after all, of the duty imposed—all those tamperings, with the determination to make an

immense sacrifice to a possibly doubtful right, which besiege the human soul in such dire extremities, now tormented her—but she resolutely refused to listen. And, in justice to her, under this great trial—much of the unnatural hardness of her feelings ought to be attributed to the violence of the situation in which she found herself.

In the meantime, the little child—the innocent victim, of whose individual fate so little seemed to be thought—was imbibing every hour a fresh accession of such ideas as would render her future downfall the more painful.

The more Lady Emma endeavoured to hold herself and the little girl apart from that grandeur and magnificence, in which she felt they had no rightful share, the more every servant in the house—alienated by what they thought such culpable caprice, and deeply

offended by what they regarded as an affront to the memory of their master—endeavoured to make up for it, by heaping fresh marks of respect and affection upon his little heiress.

That the child should be debarred from any single trifling mark of dignity, which they thought belonged to one, in their eyes, of little less—and who, in fact, was, as the world goes, *really* of little less importance than a royal child—was what they resisted by every means in their power.

Lady Emma had ordered the fashion of the child's mourning; but Nurse, in conveying the directions, took care to add, that everything was to be of the finest and most expensive materials that it was possible to procure. Such, in short, as it became Miss Aubrey to wear; one who would be the greatest heiress in the six neighbouring counties, if not in all England and Wales. The butler brought out the small silver service, which had, in days gone by, been in use for the little Edward;—but which the simplicity of William Aubrey's and

Lady Emma's taste had denied to their own little girl.—But now Lady Emma was not present, the beautiful little silver-gilt set was brought out.

“What beauty little silver dishes!—Nursy—Am I to dine off these?”

“Yes, Miss Aubrey.—It's proper you should learn to use such things—it being your just condition never to eat but off solid gold and silver”—said the butler, pompously.—He had brought up Miss Aubrey's dinner this day himself, that he might have an opportunity of seeing the little heiress, and paying his respects to her.

It was as if a gloriole was round the child's head in his eyes.

And so he settled it at the housekeeper's-room table.

“It's peculiar to our house, I think, Mrs. Plumridge”—thus he laid down the law—“that our heiress should be not only rich beyond computation, as I am assured—but one of the beautifullest little children eyes ever beheld.—Many heiresses that it has been my fortune to

see in the world, were ugly—most, only passable at best—but *our* heiress bids fair to be as gloriously beautiful as the greatest of Queens.—And I hope, and I believe, that less than a duke—or, may be, a real prince himself will not satisfy her—when she comes to the years of choice.”

“I don’t know for that,” said Mrs. Plumridge, grumpily; “I hope my lady won’t have the choosing for her then—She’s more likely to marry her to some poor gentleman, artist, beggar—than dukes or princes, if one may judge by all one has heard.”

“Ay, poor Mrs. Craven!—She used to reproach my lady with having a low taste—but I never saw anything of it—on the contrary, I think she had too high a taste, if one may say so—One thing I know, of late at least—she was used to look down scornfully upon my poor master, that was.”

“Ay, many a bitter word that brought out from Mrs. Craven—but then Craven was a bitter woman—and hated my lady, one must confess.”

“Craven was her enemy—A serpent in her path—that’s sure—but then my lady so laid herself out for it with her curious ways—Craven, with all her faults, loved her master—He had been her nurse-child—and that is more than my lady perhaps did—at least, as a wife ought to do.”

“Well, poor man, he’s dead—and now who’ll look sharp after the child, I wonder,” said Mrs. Plumridge, whose sympathies, as is common among servants in most families, were altogether with the children.

“Why, my lady, to be sure!—who else?” cried the butler—“Who that knows anything of law, but knows as the surviving parent is the natural guardian of the child?”

“The more’s the pity—for Lady Emma wants the natural affection”—(lowering her voice)—“Nurse tells me that her conduct to that child since its poor father’s eyes were closed, is something as exceeds belief.”

CHAPTER V.

Oh, stony heart ! why wilt thou wring me thus ?

Oh, heart more cold

Than these wild hills . . .

Than all these inland rocks.—*Ariadne.*

W. C. BENNETT.

THE child was held up by her nurse to a window, from which she could watch the long line of the funeral procession, as it drew up to the hall-door ; and thence slowly defiled in what appeared almost an interminable length of line down the approach, gradually disappearing among the trees.

The eyes were fixed upon the scene, and the little creature watched with mute, wondering attention, and profound awe. To her young

imagination there was something inexpressibly mournful and grand in these dark groups, and the long cloaks, and the piles of sable feathers, borne by the accompanying mutes. The teams of black-draped horses, tossing their plumes, with necks gravely arched, as if aware of the solemn part they had to play—and the dreadful gloomy hearse, and the mourning-coaches following in a long, long line!—This was death, then. To her, this darkness, this blackness, this slow solemn motion, these waving catafalques, and plumes, and pawing horses—this was what people meant by death!

The little child shuddered, and yet her heart swelled as at something noble and grave.—She had not, like many another child, had her imagination terror-stricken with a sort of horrible disgust, at the aspect of this *apparail* of death under its coarser forms—the grandeur of the scene impressed her with a melancholy but a lofty feeling.—As the procession of mourning coaches passed away, and the gentlemen's carriages drew up one after

the other to close the line, the child turned away, and stepped down from the window-seat, upon which she had been sitting.

“Stay, dear,” said Nurse—“won’t you see the carriages draw up. Such handsome carriages—see, there’s Lord Atheney’s—and there’s Lord Delasterre’s—and there’s Sir Thomas Tresham’s—look, dear.”

“They’re not black,” said the child, and again turned away. “I don’t like yellow coaches at my papa’s burial.”

“Oh! but you don’t understand, you precious darling,” said Nurse, taking her upon her knee and kissing her; then aside to one of the maids standing by—“Did you ever see such a sensible little creature? All these carriages is come to do honour to your poor papa.”

“Do honour?”—repeated the child, looking puzzled.

“Yes; do honour, dear—because your papa was the richest and greatest gentleman on this side the country, as you are going to be,

Miss Aubrey—and all these gentlemen come to show how they loved and respected your papa. They send every gentleman his carriage. Law!—if there is not Sir John Faulconer's carriage, of Drystoke. Now, *that* I do think a compliment to my poor master—for it's a monstrous way to come, and *they* hardly visited.—Look, dear—what a number of carriages there are—and all to show love and regard to your poor papa.”

“Do the gentlemen send 'em—because they loved papa?”

“Yes, dear—because he was such a rich great gentleman;” put in the other maid—“I've heard say—he could buy Lord Atheney ten times over.”

The child seemed not to hear this remark;—she turned her eyes to Nurse, and looked earnestly in her face, as a child does when it is struggling to comprehend a new idea.

“Then every carriage is love to papa.”

And she turned again to the window, and

watched in silence until the last had disappeared.

“There was a great many,”—she said with a sigh of satisfaction,—as, the whole being over, Nurse put her down from her knee, and went about her affairs in the nursery.

The child was more than usually grave and thoughtful the remainder of the day. The pomp she had witnessed seemed to weigh upon her. Whenever the nursery door opened, she would look up wistfully from her little chair. She appeared to be hoping some one would come, but no one appeared,—bed-time drew near.

“Mayn’t I go and kiss mamma, Nursy, before bed-time?” she asked.

“Why, my lady hasn’t sent for her,” whispered Nurse to herself,—“but sure, I may venture to take her.”

She took the little one in her hand, led her to, and knocked at Lady Emma’s sitting-room door.

“Who’s that? Come in.”

Nurse opened the door, and the little Imogene presented herself—in deep mourning, and still carrying her doll, who wore a black sash.

It was almost as if a shell had fallen in the midst of an assembly of conspirators.

Mr. and Mrs. Birchell and Lady Emma were together. Each drew back as if conscience-stricken. They were, in fact, at that very moment engaged in considering the form of the opinion which was to be submitted to the Counsel, and which they expected would deprive this little girl of everything she possessed in the world—of place—family—fortune—everything.

The child had her eyes bent to the ground, as she entered, the picture of modesty and sensibility—and, we may add, of infant beauty,—for, whether she promised to grow up handsome or not, Imogene was a most interesting child.

“Imogene!” exclaimed the mother.

“Miss Aubrey did not like to go to bed without kissing you, Lady Emma,” said Nurse,

in a tone in which deep censure was hidden, but imperfectly, by the forms of respect.

“Come and kiss me, then, my dear,”—said the mother. And the little girl, the colour rising to her cheeks, crossed the room, and dropping upon one knee, kissed her mother’s hand.

Mr. and Mrs. Birchell remained immoveable—miserable and immoveable—filled with intense pity, with something approaching to remorse—to horror—at what they were engaged in—and yet, with the dreadful conviction that it was their duty to persevere. Every painful feeling exasperated by that self-disgust, which the practice of concealment, however necessary, occasions to the ingenuous mind.

They watched Lady Emma in silence.

She raised the little girl from her knees,—and said gently,—but yet coldly,—

“Don’t do that again, Imogene—you know I do not like it.—Good night, little girl—go to sleep;”—and she bent down and kissed her forehead; and the child sadly, and with

her little head all drooping under the reproof, slowly went away.

“This is insupportable,” cried Mr. Birchell—as the door closed.

“So I told you,” said Emma—“It *is* insupportable;” and she pressed her hand almost convulsively upon her heart—“but let us go on with what we were about.”

And they proceeded in the business. The will was not to be opened, except to examine whether there were directions for the funeral, until the next morning, in expectation that the night’s post might bring a letter from Mr. Glenroy, saying that he would be there. So they had employed this evening in preparing the paper they had decided upon sending.—For Lady Emma, of course, considering herself guardian—as every mother naturally does—in the case of her own infant child, felt the most racking anxiety to have all things placed as soon as possible upon their proper footing; in order that the little girl might, as speedily as could be done, be released from

the false and improper situation in which she was at present placed—every hour of which was, as her mother saw, only increasing the number of those impressions which would render the impending fall the more destructive to her happiness. As for herself, she felt the burden of her present feelings so insupportable, that she was impatient for any change that would release her from them. Her friends felt all this for her, and as they really saw no advantage, but greatly the contrary, in the least unnecessary delay,—they had, as I said, spent the afternoon of this day in preparing the relation to be laid before the counsel whom they had determined upon consulting, not only as to the point itself, but as to the proper measures to be pursued for the legal verification of the fact, and the restoration of the inheritance to the rightful heir.

They concluded the business before they parted for the night,—and thoroughly dissatisfied with themselves, with the employment in which they had been engaged, and

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with everything around them, sought their harrassed pillows.

Oh, how infectious and wide-spreading is the evil resulting from a heavy sin !

Lady Emma was sitting, silent and melancholy, at her solitary breakfast the next morning.

The papers relating to the statement had been prepared the preceding night ; the instructions for a case to be laid before counsel, were before her,—and, from time to time, she took up first one paper, then another, and looked them over with a most wearied eye, and wretched expression of face.

The pains of every description which she had to suffer, it is melancholy to dwell upon. All was maze and confusion within ; but one feeling alone never varied, — it was the resolution to have the truth brought to light—and justice done.

So she sat in profound solitude, and the

silence which surrounded her, and which had succeeded to the bustle of the preceding day, was almost too awful. She had her window open,—but not a sound was to be heard. There was no voice of singing in the woods;—even the very winds were hushed into the perfect stillness of an autumn day. No echoing of cheerful labour from the fields,—no hum of a large busy household in the mansion. As she laid down the papers, and, falling back in her chair, drearily contemplated the scene before her, this deep silence felt most oppressive.

Then, as in Clarence's dream,—visions of many things came wandering by. Scenes were now allowed to recur, which, during her life of wifedom, she had driven most conscientiously from her mind. 'The vision, as of an angel with bright hair,' arose,—to be followed by the mournful spectre of him, whose relations with herself had been attended by such a melancholy fatality. Again, the dark sad eyes turned wistfully upon her, as they had so often done, seeming to ask for that which she could so im-

perfectly give—and then, that dark death-cloud came over them ;—the death-cloud from a broken heart, which she had broken—and regret, self-condemnation—astonishment at her own harshness, was mingled with that strange intuitive antipathy, which a woman of delicacy feels at the idea of a degraded love.

She was aroused from this painful reverie by the sound of a carriage approaching, which, in the universal silence, was distinctly heard at a considerable distance. It was not the light gig of the solicitor who was hourly expected, it was the roll of a large, heavy travelling carriage, and the tramp of four horses. Presently, there was a loud ring at the door-bell, the bustle of an arrival, and shortly afterwards, the butler, knocking at the door of Lady Emma's room, informed her that Mr. Glenroy was come.

“ Mr. Glenroy !” she cried, very much hurried, and looking dreadfully nervous.—For well she felt that now the decisive moment was arrived, and that, even before the con-

sultation with the counsel, which had seemed, at least, to delay the inevitable decision,—everything would be irrevocably determined by this old friend of the family, so soon as the fatal secret should be disclosed to him. Poor thing! like many another feeble one involved in circumstances which she feels too overpowering—she looked to delay—to a reprieve, as a sort of comfort.

“Mr. Glenroy!” she repeated,—“I did not expect him so soon.—Pray show him into the morning-room—Inquire whether he has breakfasted—I will wait upon him immediately.”

Hurriedly she went to her dressing-room, swallowed a glass of water, looked into the glass, passed a wet napkin over her red and swelled eyelids, pushed back the few hairs which had strayed from the very small bands allowed to appear under her widow’s cap, threw a large crape scarf over a figure only too beautiful in its close weeds—and, trembling, hesitating, faltering, left her own apartments

for the first time since her husband's death, to proceed down stairs.

She had never seen Mr. Glenroy before, for he resided in a remote part of Scotland, and had never visited England since she had become connected with Mr. Aubrey's family; but she well knew how greatly he had been esteemed and valued by them all. Not only because he was a man of large possessions and of a most ancient and respectable family—but because he was regarded as their closest friend,—their best adviser,—the one, in short, whose opinion was consulted upon every emergency, or great passage of life.

She had heard Edward mention him occasionally with much respect—but, William, she knew, more particularly held him in the highest esteem and value—as his father, indeed, had done before him.

Distance alone,—for in the travelling of those days a distance to that extent afforded a very serious interruption to a friendly intercourse—had probably prevented Mr. Glenroy

from exercising any influence upon Mr. Aubrey's, the father's, last dispositions. Upon various accounts, Lady Emma had reason to believe that in these he had taken no share; and for this reason she felt the more well inclined towards him—and to look upon him with satisfaction as the arbiter to whom she might appeal with confidence.

Still, as I said, his arrival, so unexpectedly early, produced that hurry and nervousness, which we feel when some awful decision,—which we know must finally arrive, but which we believe is delayed for an indefinite period,—is suddenly and at once brought before us.

Trembling, then, and nervous, her colour rapidly changing, her eyes lighted up with an anxious expression, which only made the whole beautiful face more beautiful, she laid her hand upon the lock of the door—it opened, and the fair vision, clad in her deep sables, was presented to the eyes of Mr. Glenroy.

Mr. Glenroy was sitting by the table, his arm extended upon it. He was a tall, spare

Scotchman, of almost gigantic proportions—his high cheek bones, and features large and strongly marked, though thin and gaunt. The expression of his face was sensible and grave to sternness, almost to harshness—his eye penetrating, searching, and severe—his whole appearance that of a man of birth and high breeding, though with a certain formality in the courtly dignity of his manners, which spoke of days gone by.

He rose as Lady Emma appeared, slowly dilating to his great height, which was hardly observable when seated—and with a countenance, whose gravity was scarcely softened one shade by the entrance of this lovely vision—made his somewhat stiff and highly polished salutations.

“The Lady Emma Aubrey, I presume.”

She slightly bowed her head.

“Madam, I hope I see you as well as the present melancholy circumstances will admit.”

Again she bowed her head in silence, and a slight spasm passed over her face.

They both sat down without saying more. It was not till he had resumed his seat, that Mr. Glenroy, in a dry, unmelodious, and most inflexible voice, thus went on:—

“I fear, Madam, I may have come upon you somewhat suddenly—I had reason to expect I should not be able to join you so soon, but travelling produced an effect rather unusual with me—I found I gathered strength as I proceeded, and during these last three days, I have been enabled to press forward, at a rate that brings me here nearly a week earlier than I had anticipated.”

“I am very glad you found yourself better, Sir,” in a faint nervous voice; but, rising, and putting her hand upon the bell—
“I desired them to ask whether you had breakfasted—You will take some refreshment?”

“I breakfasted, Madam, at six o’clock this morning—My usual mess of oatmeal porridge suffices me till noon—I will take nothing, I thank you, Madam, at present.”

Silence again.

An awful silence she felt it to be—Mr. Glenroy sat there looking so grave and imposing—his tall figure terrifically erect,—his stern eye, thin lips, unflinching mouth, and long and most determined—some might have said—obstinate-looking chin, appearing anything rather than encouraging to her timidity.

He seemed to expect his hostess to speak next.

It was indeed her turn—He did not, however, encourage her by even looking at her, far less by any of that softening of the countenance which she was so generally accustomed to find, greeting the approach of her youth, grace, and beauty, now rendered doubly interesting by her mourning dress, and the heavy cloud upon her countenance. It would almost seem as if he had not even observed whether she were beautiful or not—nor heeded that she was young, and timid, and suffering. To him she was “Madam,” the relict of the house of Aubrey, and she seemed to be nothing more.

The silence became painfully oppressive to her, yet she could not force herself to speak; at last, Mr. Glenroy broke the awful pause by saying,—with a sort of formal abruptness—

“I understood the reading of my late friend Mr. Aubrey’s will would be postponed until to-day.—I conclude the usual search has been made—and that his last testament was found in its proper place.—My friend was a practical and exact man of business.—*Man*, in that, as in everything else,”—was the brief encomium which closed the sentence.

“The last will,”—began Lady Emma, in a trembling voice—“that was regularly executed, is in the hands of his solicitor, Mr. Welland,—but there was another disposition of his property, which, in his last moments—he was . . . he was very anxious to make—but— . . .”

“But, . . . did he execute it . . . ?” asked Mr. Glenroy, turning round sharply, and fixing his severe questioning eyes upon Lady Emma—

“No, . . . No, . . . He—he could

not,—but there can be no doubt as to his intentions . . .”

“With intentions in such cases, Madam, the law has nothing to do,”—Mr. Glenroy replied, coldly.

Silence again.—

Presently Mr. Glenroy began once more—

“The will, I presume, which is in Mr. Welland’s hands, is the one containing the well-considered and most judicious disposition of his property, which my friend, the late William Aubrey, showed to me, when last he was with me in Aberdeenshire. A testament, which, after some slight modifications suggested by myself”—among others, but Mr. Glenroy did not mention this, was the suppression of a very handsome legacy left him in compensation for the trouble which would be imposed by the office of Executor,—“was put into a proper form by a very first-rate conveyancer in whom we had both perfect confidence,—and was, I believe, to prevent the risk of accident, lodged in the hands of Mr. Welland—A copy of it

having at the same time been forwarded to me. This, I presume, is the will that Mr. Welland produces."

"I don't know,—I can't tell,—I know nothing of all this."

"I should think very probably *not*," remarked Mr. Glenroy, with some emphasis upon the last word.

Another pause.—

It was again broken by Mr. Glenroy inquiring—

"Mr. Welland?—Is he expected here this morning?"

"I appointed twelve o'clock—It is half-past eleven, now,"—looking hurriedly at her watch, —and feeling, she knew not why, excessively frightened.

Why should she be frightened?—What had she to do.—Nothing, but most disinterestedly to renounce for herself and her child, the immense inheritance which, by the executed will, she believed would devolve to them, through the declaring a secret most injurious to her own

interests—why should she feel ashamed and afraid to do this?

It was his manner, surely—His terrible, dry, cold, imperturbable manner,—but she must summon up courage, she must do her duty;—cost what it would, she must stand by the truth—justice should be done to Edward.

Ah!—in that name lay the conscious weakness, that made her woman's heart a coward.

Yet the very weakness was in itself a source of daring.

It is the very weakness of the mother which makes her brave the lion in his fury.

“There are a great many circumstances,” Emma began again, in a faltering voice, “that ought to be explained . . . that must be explained——Mr. William Aubrey——The last hours of his life were very awful——and afterwards——there was a dreadful scene.”

“I dare say—I can believe it, Madam. My friend, I am sorry to say, had lately not been a happy man”—in a tone so grave and

serious that it almost amounted to reproach.

She bent down her head, and answered in a low voice—

“No—It was impossible that he should be——”

“And why was that?—He was a man (raising his voice, and speaking for the first time with something approaching to feeling)—“ who had every right to be happy.—A man, more universally esteemed—or with more just right to universal esteem, never existed—whether we consider his fine intellectual powers—the firmness and uprightness of his character—his great munificence, or his strong affections. In one instance alone—a weakness, which the Lady Emma must forgive a dry, old Scotchman for qualifying, in its excess, *as* a weakness—one shared, perhaps, by some of the greatest men that have ever existed, but which, I own, has ever appeared unaccountable to me—an infirmity I will not, therefore, at all believe to be inconsistent with the finest moral and intellectual qualities—In one instance there was . . .”

But Emma now raised her eyes and fixed them upon Mr. Glenroy, with such an expression of displeasure and astonishment that even he was moved by it.

“Madam,” he said, “perhaps, you do not altogether coincide in this opinion.”

“No”—she answered—her courage returning with her surprise and displeasure—“I do *not*.”

“I have not to learn,”—was the now somewhat indignant reply—“that Lady Emma Aubrey was not exactly in the habit of regarding my friend’s great and good qualities by the estimate affixed through the opinion of all the world.”

“I estimated Mr. Aubrey’s abilities as highly as any one living,”—she answered with spirit—“but that one weakness, as you are pleased to term it—and to which you have ventured to allude in my presence—obscured his other qualities in my eyes.”

Mr. Glenroy could only answer with a look of surprise, at least equal to her own—speedily

to be succeeded by one of mingled pity and contempt, as he muttered to himself—"And so this is what a man gets by making himself the slave of a woman!"

With a smile almost of derision upon his thin, sarcastic lip, he added,—

"I should have thought the Lady Emma Aubrey would have been the last to quarrel with an infirmity of this nature."

"And why, Sir?"—and her eyes began to sparkle—"must I be supposed to be the last to quarrel with an infirmity of this nature? Because I profited by it?"

Silence was, as she thought it, the almost contemptuous reply to this question.

"And by what right," she cried, kindling with excitement and passion, rising impetuously from her chair, and coming up to him—"And by what right do you take upon you to suppose—that one, a total stranger to you—would be actuated by such mean, base, despicable motives of self-interest?"

"So, so," was Mr. Glenroy's mental ejacu-

lation—"here it comes—rather more violent than even I had been taught to expect.—My dear Madam," he said—"be calm, I entreat of you.—No offence was intended, I assure you! I entreat you to be composed—It was an idle remark."

"An idle remark!"—returning to her seat, and sitting down, feeling deeply offended.

"Why," resumed Mr. Glenroy, and the sarcastic smile returned to his harsh features as he spoke—"I have not in general found ladies inclined to be so deeply offended at the accusation of having, through their charms, exercised almost unlimited power over the hearts of clever and sensible men.—I am an old bachelor, Madam, and I cannot say that I have, during my life, known much of such experiences—but, permit me to say, you are the very first young lady I ever met with who was offended at the implication of having exercised, perhaps, a little too all-powerful an influence over her husband."

"Was that all you intended to imply by

what you said?"—Lady Emma asked, with an air of displeasure.

"Yes, indeed—what else could I possibly intend? I knew but that one weakness in, perhaps, the most manly character it was ever my lot to meet with.—Your ladyship must forgive me if I sometimes lamented the extent to which it existed.—I am no professed admirer of your sex.—I never was—I should not be what I now am, I suppose, if I had shared in the common delusion."

Lady Emma remained silent—she seemed so astonished at his roughness that she could not speak.

He appeared not to notice her emotion, but, after a moment's pause, went on.

"As it seems best that we should come to an understanding as soon as possible, and also, in justice to my own sincerity, may I beg your ladyship to allow me to acknowledge, candidly, this further fact, that I did everything in my power, during my friend's lifetime, to weaken an influence which I thought

excessive—And now that I have owned thus much, doubtless you will be angry, Madam—and I cannot wonder, but I must bear it.”

He expected her, as he would have termed it, to fly out again at this—but she did not move a muscle of her face. She only looked up quietly in his, and seemed satisfied with him so far. There was nothing Emma valued like truth.

On his side, he appeared better pleased with her, and he went on to say—

“I do not know whether you are prepared to find to what extent my exertions, so directed, have influenced the tenor of my late friend’s will.”

“However that may be, is a matter of little moment,” was her reply. “*That* will—whatever it contains—was written under a totally mistaken impression as to facts. In all justice and equity, the paper left unfinished in his last moments, is the testament which ought to be abided by.”

Mr. Glenroy gave a low, almost inaudible

whistle, at this most unexpected, and, as he thought, almost impudent assertion, and fixing his eyes, which looked as if they would pierce her very soul, upon Lady Emma's face—

“That paper you speak of was not legally executed, as I believe you gave me to understand?”

“No—most unfortunately not—but I hope that will not render it difficult to do justice,”—she said.

“Difficult! Amounting to impossible!”—was the reply, with an air of confidence and satisfaction.

It must be plain to every one, who has followed the course of the above conversation, that Mr. Glenroy had arrived at Haughton, not only without inclination to be charmed by or show indulgence to Lady Emma—but, for some reason or another, with a very strong prejudice in her disfavour.

CHAPTER VI.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness ! Woman's
pleasure, woman's pain—

Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a
shallower brain.

TENNYSON.

TWELVE o'clock struck, and, punctual to a moment, Mr. Welland's gig drew up to the door.

"Mr. Welland," said the footman, opening the door of the morning room.

"The solicitor?"—asked Mr. Glenroy—
"Madam, by your leave, may he be shown in here?"

"Yes;—show, Mr. Welland in. Are Mr. and Mrs. Birchell come?"

"Not yet, my lady."

“Mr. and Mrs. Birchell.—May I take the liberty to inquire who Mr. and Mrs. Birchell may be; and the concern they have in this business?” asked Mr. Glenroy, coldly.

“They have much,”—was Lady Emma’s equally cold brief answer. “Mr. Welland, good morning,”—as that gentleman entered the room. “Charles—run down towards the vicarage,—beg Mr. and Mrs. Birchell to be so good as to make haste. They promised to be here by a quarter to twelve.”

Mr. Glenroy looked round as this order was given, but he made no remark. With a somewhat ceremonious bow he turned to the solicitor:—“Good morning, Sir,—Mr. Welland, I presume.”

“The same, Sir—I have the pleasure, I believe, to salute Mr. Glenroy.—Sir, it was very good of you to come;—I hope the rapid journey has not inconvenienced you.”

“Not at all—I feel the better for it—I deeply regret that I was not able to reach Haughton yesterday.”

“I trust Mr. Glenroy will find that everything has been carried out to the last iota—exactly as he directed.”

“I doubt it not, Sir.—Is that the will, may I ask, which you hold in your hand?”

“It is, Sir—a copy of the will forwarded to me by Messrs. Joy and Brothers, of Lincoln’s-Inn—upon the outside the name of the executor is written down, with directions to apply to him in any matter relating to the funeral.”

“Give me leave to inquire whether you are acquainted further with the contents of the will?”

“Not in the least—the late Mr. Aubrey never entered into conversation with me upon the subject of these his particular dispositions, though, I flatter myself, I was so happy as to enjoy much of his confidence;—but, indeed, since his return from his last visit to Scotland—which was about the time this will was delivered into my custody—Mr. Aubrey’s spirits and health were in so lamentable a state, that he was obliged to postpone all matters of business.”

“So I have been given to understand.”

“Lady Emma,”—as she was rising to leave the room, impatient to learn whether Mr. and Mrs. Birchell were coming or not—“I conclude we may proceed without delay to the business upon which I am come;—my time is limited, and there may be much to be done. I should propose that the head servants of the household should be summoned to hear the will read—such has been the usual custom in this family, and I see no reason to depart from it.”

“And my friends, Sir?—Are we not to wait for them?”

“I don’t see what Mr. and Mrs. Birchell, as I understood their name to be—have to do, or ought to have to do, in this business.”

But, as he spoke, Mr. and Mrs. Birchell were heard entering the hall, and were ushered by Charles into the morning room.

Emma started up to meet them, giving a hand to each—Mr. Glenroy rose from his chair to his full height, and made a stately bow.

“Mr. Glenroy—Mr. and Mrs. Birchell,”—

was all that passed; for the servants now crowded into the room, most curious and impatient to hear the will; and Mr. Welland, opening the paper with considerable deliberation and solemnity, proceeded to read the important document.

The dispositions were, in many respects, different from what had been in general anticipated. A handsome addition was made to the life interest, derived by Lady Emma, from a very liberal marriage settlement; but, with the exception of one thousand pounds, to be paid into her hands at her husband's decease, nothing was left in her own power. The whole of Mr. Aubrey's immense property was bequeathed to his daughter, only shackled with two rather singular conditions. The one, that during her lifetime she should not be allowed to alienate any part of it—except for the purposes of settlement on occasion of her own marriage, in case she should marry. Even the income, to any amount exceeding one fiftieth, she was not to have the power of disposing

of, except for her own use and benefit;—unless in sums, of which the highest amount to be bestowed on any one individual during any one twelve months, was specified. Subject to this condition, the immense income which she would enter into possession of, was to be entirely at her own disposal. And a very large allowance was ordered, till such time as she came of age, with the express direction that she should continue to reside at Haughton Hall with her mother, so long as both mother and daughter should remain unmarried, and the mother continue to desire it; and that during the daughter's subsequent life, Haughton Hall should, even in case she married, be made—as much as circumstances would admit—her principal home.

With respect to the subsequent disposition of the property, it was left to collateral relations, provided the daughter did not attain the age of forty years, or survive her mother—in either of the latter cases, the disposition, if she lived to the age mentioned, lay with her, under certain limitations and conditions.

No mention whatever was made of Edward in this will. It was evident that it had been executed before the least surmise that Edward lived had been entertained ; but it was likewise evident that, for some reason or other, the confidence which Mr. Aubrey had appeared to place in Lady Emma had been withdrawn.

A still greater proof of this—and one which she felt to be exquisitely painful—was, that, instead of being appointed sole guardian of the child—Mr. Glenroy was united with her in that high trust ; so that no important step, which in any way regarded her, could be taken without that gentleman's sanction.

It would have been easy to have traced to its source the origin from whence this unusual disposition flowed, if the little party at Haughton had had the slightest suspicion of the influence exercised by Alice Craven—not only over the mind of William Aubrey—but, what seems much more unaccountable, over that of his friend Mr. Glenroy.

She had, in fact, spared no pains to bias this confidential friend of the family, as regarded Lady Emma. She seemed to have a sort of prevision of what Lady Emma's feelings and conduct would be, should certain circumstances arise; and her efforts were unremitting, so to represent matters as to obtain the exertion of Mr. Glenroy's influence in the way she desired—so that a will might be framed such as in any event to secure the Aubrey property to William's children.

Lady Emma's behaviour had given a good deal of colour to Alice Craven's insinuations; and William Aubrey, after having, by the large income he allowed her for her life, secured to her the enjoyment of everything that money in this world can give—yielded, with some difficulty, to the representations of his friend, and put the destiny of his child, or children, out of reach of her control.

Large legacies to all his servants, and a comfortable annuity to Alice Craven, closed the testamentary directions. The provision for

Alice Craven was just such as suited the connection which had all along been understood to exist between herself and William Aubrey. There was not the remotest indication whatever to lead to the suspicion of any nearer relationship.

Mr. Welland finished reading.

The servants retired, well satisfied with their personal share in their late master's liberality, and exulting that the child was now acknowledged as the indisputable heiress of this immense fortune. Not one among them but walked away several inches the higher, in his own opinion, at least, upon the latter account.

Mr. Welland turned to Lady Emma, and begged to wish the heiress happiness. Mr. Glenroy rose slowly from his chair, and approached the table, as if to take possession of the will. But Lady Emma had risen also—and, laying her hand upon the document, she said, in a firm voice—

“Before this will can be acted upon, there are certain facts which ought to be made known.”

But Mr. Birchell laid his hand upon her arm.

“Wait till we are alone with Mr. Glenroy,” he whispered.

“And why should I wait? What there is to disclose, ought, and will soon, be known to all the world.”

“Mr. Welland,” said Mr. Birchell, “a word with you, if you please;” and the two gentlemen quitted the room.

There was then silence. Lady Emma seemed to be waiting for Mr. Birchell’s return before speaking again; Grace sat looking very nervous and uneasy, watching her friend, whose face was grave and composed, as that of one who had to brace herself up to a great effort of courage. Mr. Glenroy’s countenance would have been worthy of the observation of all of them, had they not been too much occupied by their own and each other’s feelings to note the symptoms of strong emotion

which might have betrayed themselves through the rigid features of the old Scotchman. He sat in an attitude of calm, almost stern, expectation; his eye upon Lady Emma. There was keen observation—there was suspicion in it—and about his mouth a very slight, but bitter smile.

Mr. Birchell, in about five minutes, returned, and, sitting down by the table with a certain frank, straightforward plainness, habitual with him, came to the point at once, in a manner which became him remarkably well, saying,—

“You will excuse me, I am sure, dear Lady Emma—but I took it upon myself to carry off Mr. Welland before the very serious disclosure you have to make was laid open to Mr. Glenroy. In a business of this delicate nature, (excuse me for offering my opinion) the fewer people admitted into confidence, till your course is decided upon—surely the better.”

Mr. Glenroy's grey penetrating eye was now

turned upon Mr. Birchell with an expression of more approbation and satisfaction than had been visible in it since he made his entrance into Haughton Hall. Then, turning with his usual, somewhat stately gravity, to Lady Emma, “I wait, Madam, to listen to any communication your ladyship may please to make.”

The coldness, the ill-concealed suspicion and displeasure, which Emma felt to be altogether uncalled for and unwarrantable, as regarded herself—by arousing her indignation, served to nerve and to strengthen, rather than to depress, a spirit ever prompt to rise against what she thought injustice and unmerited ill-will.

She therefore answered with some dignity.

“The secret that weighs upon my mind, and which every law of justice and honour demands that I should proclaim—is one that injures no one but myself and a most unfortunate child. The grave has closed over those who would have had to share in the suffering entailed by a very heavy crime. They have escaped—we are left to bear the consequences of it.”

“Crime, Madam!” repeated Mr. Glenroy, gravely. “And with what new crime has Lady Emma to load the memory of the man who can be no longer made miserable by her ill opinion?”

There was a murmur of disapprobation from Mr. and Mrs. Birchell at this harsh speech; but Lady Emma, full of her purpose, seemed scarcely to have heard it, and yet there was a sort of allusion to it in the next thing she said.

“Mr. Aubrey was, I believe, completely unaware of the fraud that has been committed. It was not till after his eyes were closed, that the secret was betrayed.”

She stopped and hesitated a little before she could steady her voice for what rather abruptly followed.

“He was ignorant of what was to us revealed.—My husband was no son of the house of Aubrey. He was an alien, and an usurper, imposed upon the family by his nurse, Alice Craven—Geoffry Craven, the gamekeeper, was his father.”

“And by what right,” cried Mr. Glenroy, starting up from his seat in what seemed a gust of sudden irrepressible passion—“Upon what evidence does any one upon earth presume to assert such a scandalous falsehood of my friend?”

They all stared in speechless astonishment at his violence—which, aware of its impropriety, he seemed to conquer by a strong effort. He resumed his seat, saying, “I had been prepared for much—but this exceeds all expectation. The domestic treachery must, indeed, be signal that could hazard such an attempt as this. Madam—I am at a loss to conceive your object,” he added, struggling hard for composure, though every limb was shaking.

Lady Emma stood in silent amazement at this most unexpected attack. Mr. Birchell took up the word.

“As Lady Emma Aubrey’s friend,” he said, “I must take so far the liberty of interfering as to say, that this appears to be a most unjust and unwarrantable outrage upon her feelings.”

“Her feelings!” interrupted Mr. Glenroy, and he muttered, something to himself, the words “destroy—Husband’s name and honour—child!” were audible.

It was evident that every word and action of the helpless young creature were perverted by him, through the influence of some injurious and deep-rooted prejudice.

“Better anything,” said Mr. Birchell, firmly, “than that the name of one, or the prosperity of the other, should depend upon an imposture and a fraud.”

Mr. Glenroy answered only by a sort of low, scornful whistle.

“It is plain you do not believe us,” said Mr. Birchell.

“Who will? Who can? Whom do you expect to find weak enough to credit such a romance?” was the angry answer.

“You have not even listened to the evidence upon which it rests.”

“True, but I am ready to hear it. What is it that the lady has to bring forward in support of this wild asseveration?”

“Simply the solemn declaration of Alice Craven herself, made in the agonies of death before Lady Emma and my wife.”

“And the confirmation of that declaration was——”

“There was that in the circumstances of the moment, which seemed to render further confirmation as unnecessary as it was impossible.”

“The declaration was made with due deliberation and calmness, I am to suppose?”

“The woman was almost beside herself with grief. She hardly knew what she said or did.”

“She was in that state,” added Mrs. Birchell, “when deception is impossible—when truth finds its utterance in feelings beyond control.”

“And in that state of bitter rage and agony—when revenge is most sweet,”—observed Mr. Glenroy, composedly—“Madam,” turning to Mrs. Birchell—“for you, I believe, were present—please to relate to me the facts just as they occurred.”

She did so as calmly as she could; he listened with deep attention. He seemed struck,

and moved, as much as it was in his nature to be moved, by the relation—and, after she had ceased speaking, remained a considerable time silent, and as if engaged in well considering what he had heard, before uttering his opinion.

The other three sat silently awaiting, in a sort of awestruck expectation, what would be said next—it came at last.

Turning to Lady Emma—with something more even than his ordinary formality of deportment—yet with an eye certainly in some degree softened, he said—

“Madam, I think I did you injustice—and I take leave to crave your pardon.”

“It is granted,” she said, with a sort of wearied indifference, as of one who had already suffered too much to be sensible to a fresh wound.

“As for the foul and preposterous falsehood with which, in her mouth—the poor half-maddened woman left this world, to meet the Lord of truth—let me pray of you to think no more of it. Great misery and great confusion have

arisen in families from vague rumours and romantic stories of this description, creeping out among the vulgar, who are always but too ready to lend credit to such tales. Let me thank you, sir, in the name of my departed friend,"—turning to Mr. Birchell—"for your prudence in preventing this preposterous invention from spreading further. And henceforward I would make it my most urgent request, in behalf of the child to whom I am appointed guardian, and the family whose affairs are entrusted to my charge—that the matter may not again be alluded to, even in the most secret conferences—and that this unhappy woman's most criminal lie—for her sake, and that of all concerned—may with her be buried in eternal silence."

Lady Emma seemed endeavouring to speak—but there was something in this decisive manner of laying the subject at rest, which imposed for the moment even upon her.

He interrupted her, indeed, as she was struggling for words, by saying, with some feeling:—

“I craved your pardon, madam—for I had done you injustice—I now am inclined to believe that it was a mistaken sense of duty which led you to what, at first I own, appeared to me the most barbarous and unnatural of actions.—This apology is your due, and I wish to make it amply and at once—because I for one am henceforth resolved never, upon any consideration, to return to the subject.”

“And, now,” he added, taking up the will, “I will, with your permission, retire with this document to the room appointed for my use—as, with your leave, madam, I intend to trespass for a day or two upon your hospitality. Our joint-guardianship of this child will necessitate much comparison of views and consideration of plans. It is no ordinary care—The young lady will be one of the greatest heiresses of her time. Our views upon many points, as regards her rearing, may be different; but I hope at least to be met in that spirit of mutual conciliation which will alone render a difficult undertaking feasible.”

And, with a grave bow, he was rising, as if to leave the room.

But—

“This is impossible!” cried Lady Emma, starting up at last—“things cannot, and must not, be settled so. The just rights of others must not be thus disregarded and ignored. It would be wicked—it would be unpardonably criminal to profit, or suffer others to profit by what, in my heart and conscience, I believe—I know—to be a criminal imposture and fraud.”

He was leaving the room, but he turned at this, and looked at her with an almost awful sternness.

“He is dead, who had any near interest in this matter. And it ill becomes the relict of his brother to incline to the support of such a lie—an inclination which can have its source only in feelings to which I will not presume to allude. That subject is out of my province, nor is it my wish to be forced to explain my meaning further.”

And he left the room.

The last words brought the blood rushing in torrents to Lady Emma's cheek, and the fire almost flashed from her eyes—but, presently, that burst of passion subsided. Whatever her faults or mistakes, she was truth and candour itself. Her conscience, in the hidden chambers of her breast, whisperingly assented to the justice of the implied accusation. Could she lay her hand upon that wildly-throbbing heart of hers, and say—that it was quite, quite pure from secret bias? The colour subsided, and the face became pale, and the eye sad and spiritless as ever, when, sighing heavily, she said—

“What upon earth ought we to do?”

In one view, indeed, they seemed to have arrived at a termination, such as it was, of their doubts and difficulties.

Mr. Glenroy appeared to have taken up his own resolution at once, and that without the slightest scruple or hesitation. And that he was a man whose resolutions, once taken, would be difficult to shake, was evident—little of him as they had as yet seen.

But for themselves, though perhaps for a moment unsettled in their convictions, by his way of regarding the subject, they soon returned to their first impressions, and felt that sort of instinctive conviction of the truth of Alice Craven's story, which, in spite of ourselves, acts upon us almost like demonstration.

But what availed it ?

If Mr. Glenroy's impressions were just—and there appeared great reason to believe that at least this would prove to be the case—namely, that the world in general might attach no more weight to the wild assertions of the dying woman than Mr. Glenroy did—if it were true, as they now, for the first time, began to think it probably might be—that no court of justice in the world would deprive a minor of her inheritance, upon so vague and improbable a story ; supported, as Mr. Birchell felt assured the claims of that minor would, and perhaps ought to be—by the full weight of her guardian's power and influence—what was to be done ?

For her own satisfaction, Mr Birchell said Lady Emma might, if she so pleased, take the

opinion of counsel upon the point, but he now began to feel little doubt as to what that opinion would prove to be—still their own convictions remained unchanged.

A thousand trifling circumstances, evanescent resemblances passing over the face—tones, looks—all which had been unnoticed before, were remembered, in corroboration of that, which those two who were present at Alice's death, could not have helped believing without any corroboration at all.

Lady Emma's wretchedness and perplexities now seemed scarcely to be endured.—Thus doubly to rob Edward, and that the child she had, until this horrible period, loved so dearly, should be set up as the object to benefit by this intolerable injustice, which would render a double crime successful, was agony. She walked up and down the room wringing her hands with a gesture of helpless despair.—

At length she stopped suddenly,—

“I must speak to him again.—I am a coward—that cold, stern manner of his makes

a coward of me. How often in my life have I been betrayed by my own want of courage.—But here—at the turning point of existence I will prove myself at least no mean, unprincipled dastard.”—

Mr. Birchell shook his head.—

“If Lady Emma intends to try further remonstrance with Mr. Glenroy, I fear it will be of little or no avail.—Yet I think she is right to attempt it,—and I think she is right to make the attempt alone.—Her words will have more influence—and he will set himself less obstinately to resist them, when there are no standers-by to witness what he would despise in himself as a weakness.

“I will go then,” she said, “at once—Give me a glass of water, dear Grace,—and God grant me courage and strength—He is my witness—that from my heart, I believe that what I do is for the establishment of His holy truth and in defence of right.”

She swallowed the water, went to one of the long mirrors which reflected the beauty of

her face and figure at full length—a beauty which her widow’s weeds seemed rather to enhance than diminish, so well their mournful simplicity harmonised with that pale earnest face of hers. She smoothed her hair, arranged some part of her dress, which in her excessive agitation had fallen slightly into disorder, and then left the room.

CHAPTER VII.

“A saying hard to shape in act.”

TENNYSON.

IN expectation of Mr. Glenroy's arrival, a suite of apartments, according to the usual custom in this magnificent house, had been prepared for him. They consisted of a bedroom, dressing-room, and sitting-room.

To these, as soon as he left the morning room where his first interview with Lady Emma had taken place, he had been conducted by direction of the butler; and we find him now sitting at the open window, with a small table

before him, upon which the will lies. But he is not reading it. One hand rests upon it,—but his eye, through the open window, is fixed upon the splendid landscape stretched before him—now glowing with all the rich, varied hues of the closing year ; whilst the grey mists of a fine autumn day, are still floating round, and softening to a sort of touching solemnity the wondrous beauty of the scene.

The tall gaunt Scotchman sat, as usual, quite erect though backwards, in his chair. His frame seemed to be of iron, that could not bend. His strong, harsh features, expressive of so much stern gravity and manly determination, were now overspread with a more than usual seriousness,—though the accustomed sternness of the expression was softened with a touch of human feeling.

He was thinking of his friend—of the man he had loved—the only man—the only human being, perhaps, besides his mother, whom he had ever truly loved,—and of that friend's untimely and most unhappy fate.

And all these woes had been the consequences of his fatal infatuation for a woman.

Mr. Glenroy belonged to an old Scotch family—genuine descendants of the ancient Covenanters—and something of the iron temper of those by-gone days seemed to have descended upon, and still to linger around, him. A firm, unswerving spirit of stern religion—which belongs more to the awful temper of the Old, than to the gentle love and mercy of the New, Testament—unflinching rectitude, passions controlled with a giant force; but a heart insensible to, and nourishing a mingled feeling of distrust and contempt for, whatever belonged to the softer feelings. Love for him was nothing but the childish Cupid—a weakness unworthy of a wise and religious man. He had never in his life been subjected to its influence, and he had no conception of the passion in its loftier and more ennobling form. He looked upon it as a mere infatuation and slavery—and the basest of slaveries—slavery to that, which was in itself worthless.

He had, therefore, lamented, as one would lament the incurable sickness of a valuable man—over his friend's infatuation for Lady Emma. He had, upon this account, from the first, taken up a sort of prejudice against her;—and he had been, therefore, but too ready to listen to the insinuations which Alice had found an opportunity to make, and to those distorted facts which she failed not to lay before him.

For Alice had long been in correspondence with Mr. Glenroy. How she contrived first to enter into this communication, it is immaterial to relate—suffice it to say, that, having once contrived to establish a relation with so influential a friend of the family, Alice had taken sedulous care to maintain it—and she had of late,—since her apprehensions had been awakened by Emma's proceedings, after her return from the seacoast, and for the cause of which she had no suspicion—exerted all that influence which she contrived to obtain over those with whom she came into

connection, to persuade Mr. Glenroy so to advise William Aubrey, that his property should be settled in a manner which would deprive Lady Emma of any power in its ultimate disposition. She had not even rested here ; but, anxious and distrustful, had ultimately contrived that even the guardianship over the child should be so arranged as to prevent the mother having unlimited power even there.

As Alice represented the case, Mr. Glenroy had been made to believe, that she was totally indifferent to the happiness of her husband, and that this indifference extended even to his child. That her heart was given to the memory of his brother—and that her infatuation was such, that any adventurer claiming descent from that brother—as to the reality of whose death some vague and unfounded doubts had been raised—might, in all probability, persuade her to sacrifice her child's interests and her own, even for the satisfaction of claims groundless in the eyes of any one but herself, but

which she might persist in believing to be just.

It was with his mind poisoned by prejudices of this description against Lady Emma, and as much, or still more so, against her friends, the Birchells, that Mr. Glenroy had arrived at Haughton Hall; and what had taken place upon this present morning was little calculated—even with a mind more indulgently disposed than was his—to weaken the impression he had taken up.

The readiness with which, as it appeared to him, this romantic and preposterous story had been received, had only afforded him a fresh proof of the exaggeration, romance, and culpable indifference to her husband's and child's interests, which he had been led to expect in Lady Emma. For Alice, in spite of the declaration into which grief and passion had hurried her, was—be it observed—almost as jealous for the interests of the child, as she had been for those of the father.

And so he sat and mused over the past, and

gazed upon the fine possessions which lay spread on all sides around him ;—and such heart as he had,—and he *had* a heart, after all—melted within him when he thought of the father's fate, and of the little orphan girl—and such generous feeling as he possessed, was all aroused to protect this defenceless being, and preserve to her the rich inheritance, her right to which he had never allowed himself for a moment to question. He had, in fact, dismissed that part of the subject from his mind as unworthy of examination, by that kind of resolution with which people are found able to discard from their thoughts, that which they do not, and are resolved they never will, admit.

So complete was his—as we may surely call it—obstinate blindness upon the subject,—that it did not even in the slightest degree disturb his conscience. He took it so entirely, and at once, for granted, that the whole was an absurd lie, that he did not think himself bound even to inquire further into the evidence upon which it rested.

To do this would have been to him, much what it would have been to you or me, to inquire into the evidences of Buddhism. He sat there, therefore, certainly not employed in re-considering this part of the subject, which he had at once dismissed from his mind. He was, indeed, rather lost in reverie at this moment than engaged in reflection, and indulging a tenderness to which he was little subject; but he felt the loss of his friend acutely, and the place, and the circumstances—even the very character of that autumn morning, softened him in an unusual manner.

There was a slight tap at the door—the lock turned, and the melancholy figure of Lady Emma presented itself.

He did not start.—Mr. Glenroy was never known to be so taken by surprise, as to give such a testimony of nervous weakness—but he rose slowly from his chair, and approaching her, said—

“Were you in want of me, Madam?—I am quite at your service.”

And he made as if he were going to follow her out of the room.

“I wished to speak to you alone—And what better place than this?”—she said, entering.

He gravely placed an arm-chair opposite to the one he had been occupying, and they both sat down without speaking.

She found it difficult to begin;—but she struggled with the nervous feelings, with which something even in the very look and presence of Mr. Glenroy filled her. She called up every consideration of duty and honour. She thought of Edward, of his wrongs, and of his sufferings—till her cheeks gradually recovered a little colour—her frame its firmness—and at last she was able to speak, and with only the slightest perceptible trembling in her voice—she said—

“I have come to speak to you without witnesses—because I think it is best to make this appeal to your sense of right, when alone.—The manner,” she went on more hur-

riedly, for already her heart began to quail beneath that eye, fixed upon her with an almost awful gravity of attention—"the manner—in which—as it seemed to me—to all of us—that this most important secret was at once put aside by you—seemed to me—seemed to us—inconsistent with truth—inconsistent with rectitude—inconsistent with justice—and"—warming as she proceeded—"I, for one, will never—never consent, that either I or mine shall profit, in the slightest degree, by so monstrous an imposture, and so wicked a deception."

Mr. Glenroy made no answer at first. His keen eye, bright and piercing as that of the basilisk, seemed penetrating through and through her,—but her conscience was clear; there was no feeling to be ashamed of now.—She was acquitting herself of a most painful duty; and what is very painful justifies itself to the conscience at once.

"Then am I to believe," at last he said, "that it is your intention and that of—that Mr. and Mrs. Birchell, to persist in giving

credence to this absurd and most pernicious imposture.”

“Imposture!” she repeated—

“Yes,” he said, “imposture!—for there, if imposture there be, the falsehood lies.—If,” he went on,—“the assertion were really ever intended to be made—and of this, as the terms are reported to me, I have the greatest doubt—it can only be attributed to the wild ravings of a grief which had passed the limits of sanity,—or to a spirit of revenge, of which, —as, certainly, there was no love for Lady Emma in the case, I believe the woman might have been capable. You cannot suppose, Madam, that having been the intimate and confidential friend of all the parties through so many years,—during which, not the slightest iota of a suspicion ever entered into the head of anyone of us,—neither of his father, nor of himself, nor of myself, who were all in very constant communication with this woman—this Alice Craven—his nurse, or, perhaps, his foster-mother . . . you cannot, allow

me to repeat it—suppose that I can credit this tale for an instant, or believe that such a fact,—if fact it were,—if there were a shadow of truth belonging to it—could thus have remained for such a series of years totally unsuspected by any one of us—so that not by one single circumstance in all that long period of time,—not by the approach of a circumstance—not by look, not by syllable—should the slightest indication have been given of the existence of so portentous a secret.”

He spoke with a clearness and decision which might give reason to suppose that he had been employing the last hour in carefully reviewing past circumstances, and endeavouring to discover whether among them anything could be observed which might corroborate or contradict the tale. But, in fact, he had been doing no such thing. He had rejected the whole story, I repeat, from the first, not only from its glaring improbability, and the apparent romance of the whole relation, but still more by an effort of the will. Mr. Glenroy was one of those,

whom, when resolved not to believe, it is impossible to convince. To abide by his first conclusion, and save the memory of his friend from debasement, and the fortunes of his child from ruin, was the determination at which he at once arrived;—and, having done so, his naturally obstinate temper rendered his resolution immoveable.—At the same time, fully alive to the fatal effects of such doubts and questions arising in families, he determined steadily to resist any attempt to stir this matter in any way, and to use all his power and influence to bury the whole question in eternal silence. And so Emma found; and as well might she have beaten herself to pieces, in the vain attempt to soften a rock, as have endeavoured to move Mr. Glenroy one line from the position he had assumed, or engage him even to listen to what she had to urge upon the subject.

He ended the conversation by saying—

“It is utterly useless, Madam, to urge the matter further to me.—I will not pain you by

saying all that I feel at this (excuse me, Madam, if I call it so) unnatural spectacle of a young mother thus warmly espousing interests at variance with those of her own child ;—nor,” he added, with a tone which began to assume considerable severity, “will I listen to certain suggestions as to the cause of this sad deviation from the usual course of feeling, which have been whispered at various times to me ;—nor will I give vent to the mingled contempt and indignation with which the conduct of those you are pleased to call your friends fills me.—In brief, here I stand to protect the interests of William Aubrey’s child, and, so help me God, I will, to my last breath, protect them.—He shall not, while I have breath to remonstrate left within me, be thus despoiled of an honourable name, though his ear is dull, and his heart insensible to injury. I am sorry,” he continued, after pausing a moment to recover his usual calmness, “that it is not a son ;—but, son or daughter, the care of their interests has been committed to

me,—and the confidence thus reposed, shall not, by me, be betrayed. . . . Let me pray you, Madam, for the second—and, I hope, for the last time, to suffer this most preposterous invention to die away in that silent contempt with which it alone ought to be treated.”

“ But how can I?—how can I?—how can I?” she cried, in a piteous voice,—“ how can I keep silence?—how lend myself to such dishonour!—such wrong!—such imposture! such crime!”

“ Again!”—he cried, sternly.—“ Will Lady Emma Aubrey never be tired of reiterating this absurdity?—What spirit of enmity?—What cruel, unnatural aversion thus urges her to the destruction of an only child? . . . One *has* heard of mothers cutting their children’s throats,” he added, roughly,—as, throwing himself back in his arm-chair, he fixed his eye upon her, as if he would have controlled a maniac.

It is useless to pursue the description of such scenes further.—They all concluded as they began.—Mr. Glenroy was immoveable in

his resolution, and he evidently as conscientiously believed himself to be in the right upon his side, as Lady Emma could do upon hers.

She spoke of her intention of obtaining the most eminent counsel's opinion. He offered no objection, only requesting that suppositious names might be given in the case submitted, and to this she, upon her side, consented. Mr. Glenroy, taking it in a manner for granted, that, in case the opinion coincided with his own, the matter should be laid at rest for ever. In the meantime, till this opinion could be obtained, things, by a sort of necessity, proceeded in their usual course, and Mr. Glenroy, as executor, began various arrangements relating to the future disposition of matters at Haughton Hall, where, according to the last instructions of William Aubrey, the heiress and her mother were to continue to reside.

The little child had remained in her nursery during the whole course of this agitated day.

The post being gone out, bearing with it the Case as agreed upon to be submitted to counsel—a calm succeeded.

Lady Emma, wearied out with fruitless opposition—most miserable, and dissatisfied with every one, angry at her own too feeble resolution—in wretched quarrel with herself, for having been thus borne down by an obstinacy which had failed in the slightest degree to shake her convictions—yet had forced herself to appear that day at the head of her table.—For she thought it proper to assume the place, and to discharge the usual duties of hospitality to her husband's friend. Mr. and Mrs. Birchell also dined at Haughton—they would not forsake her upon this first day,—and she, of course, had kept them in ignorance of Mr. Glenroy's painful and most unjustifiable insinuations.

The ladies went into the drawing-room soon after dinner, and were followed almost immediately, by the gentlemen.

It was a small, but beautifully fitted up room, one of the smaller drawing-rooms.—The chairs were covered with rich Lyons satin, embroidered with bouquets of roses in their natural colours ;—white satin, and soft pink velvet, were the curtains ;—the carpet, representing the forms and hues of wood moss, was as soft and elastic to the tread—fine mirrors, reaching from ceiling to floor, reflected the numerous lights with which, as a matter of course, the room was illuminated—pictures adorned the walls—rich china, and fine vases and flowers, the consoles—the tables were covered with splendidly bound volumes—rare prints, and valuable maps, were there also—everything that luxury, and wealth, and fine taste could combine, was lavished here—and what a contrast !

The melancholy widow, in deepest black, sat pensive and abstracted by the side of the chimney, where a bright wood fire was blazing, —lost to all that splendour to which she formed so melancholy a contrast. Mr. Birchell, by the

table, was listlessly examining a map;—Mrs. Birchell silently plied her needle.—The giant form of the stern Scotchman, appeared there like a grim figure from some antiquated hall.

In violent opposition to the character of this scene of modern luxury, he seemed not only to belong to far distant and rugged northern lands—but to ruder and sterner years, when the very form of men seemed built upon different models, from those of our softer days of refinement.

He reposed there in a ponderous chair, covered with crimson velvet, and richly gilt, apparently lost in silent meditation.

The luxury which surrounded these melancholy figures, showed like a mockery, or rather, I should say, gave evidence of the bitter truth, that lies under all mere luxury.

The clock ticked upon the chimney-piece, telling off the unhappy hours—it chimed seven.

Mr. Glenroy then lifted up his head and addressed Emma. She started at the sound of his voice, as if from a dream, so entirely had her thoughts been abstracted.

“ I have been hoping and expecting, during the time which has passed since we assembled this evening, that the most interesting member of this family might have been presented to me—I live so far apart, that I am ignorant of the fashion of these things in England ; but I thought, that before dinner—or at dessert, or in the drawing-room, afterwards, the children of the house were usually allowed to appear.—I have been waiting patiently in this expectation.—It strikes seven—may I crave leave to inquire, whether the young heiress will come down this evening, or not.”

“ I beg your pardon,” laying her hand upon the bell beside her— “ We were all so uncomfortable—I quite forgot.”

“ Oh,” said Mr. Glenroy.

“ Hardman,”—as the butler entered—“ if Miss Imogene is not gone to bed, desire Nurse to bring her down to bid us good night.”

“There!—I thought as how she’d be sent for at last—didn’t I? I’m so glad I had her dressed, and was dressed myself,” remarked Nurse to the attendant nursery girl.—“There, darling, Miss Aubrey—you are to go down—let me just put your sweet, pretty curls, a little right—there—and a wet towel for these precious hands.—Ain’t she my own, own, jewel?”—Nurse kept saying, as she took the little hand in hers, and led her treasure down stairs.—“You are to go and bid Lady Emma good night, and then you’ll see the great Mr. Glenroy.”

“I want to see Mamma—I don’t like Mr. Glenroy, because Maria says, it’s he keeps Mamma all day.”

“Oh! but you must like Mr. Glenroy, and behave pretty to him, that’s a dear.”

“Why must I?”

“Because he’s a very rich, grand gentleman, and your own poor papa’s best friend.”

“Did he love my papa?”

“To be sure he did—dear;—why, he and

poor master were the greatest friends ever was, people say."

"Then I'll try to love him too."

"Do, and behave pretty—and don't be shy, but go up to him, and ask him how he does,—and say you're very glad to see your dear papa's friend. Do you think you can remember to say that, my jewel? Don't be afraid,—there's nothing to be afraid of—he was your poor papa's great friend."

"Would papa like me not to be afraid of his great friend?"

"To be sure, if he was here he would—poor master!"

"Then I won't be afraid,—and I'll say what you said I must,—I remember. Shall I go to him first of all?"

"Yes," said Nurse, "go up to him first of all—after you have kissed your Mamma, you know."

The door opened—and the little child presented herself, attended by her Nurse, who continued standing at the half-opened door,

partly to inspire her with courage, and partly to watch how she would behave.

The child stood there for a moment in her deep mourning frock, which made her delicate lily-white complexion look still more soft and flower-like;—the hair hung in curls from the small head, but not reaching to the shoulders,—the head was a little upon one side, the finger at the lips.

So she stood a moment, looking the very picture of infant modesty,—but Nurse stooped down and whispered a few words, and the child stepped forward to Lady Emma, again bent upon one knee, and bent her lips to her mother's hand.

Lady Emma hastily raised her. She could not bear this attitude of humility which the child had assumed, no one knew why—had she, with the intuition of childhood, divined her position? or had she overheard something of what was going on?

She rose as bidden, but her mother did not embrace her. For a moment the little girl

stood by her mother's knee, looking wistfully at Mr. Glenroy, whose eyes were fixed upon her;—then she crossed to where he sat, laid her little, soft, dimpled hand upon his brown sinewy fingers, which looked as if they had been hewn out of the solid rock, and with the utmost gentleness and simplicity, said—

“I hope you are very well—I'm very glad to see you, because you are a friend of my own dear papa's.”

And the stern old Scotchman, quite subdued, threw his long sinewy arms round her, pressed her to his bosom, imprinted kiss after kiss upon the infant forehead, and a few, a very few large tears rolled down his wiry cheeks.

He held her from him—he gazed at her—he bent down his head again and kissed her—he lifted her up, and placed her on his knee—he pressed her little head against his bosom.

He was moved, melted,—shaken, to the very soul,—he had never known what it was to love woman or child before,—he gave all the love,

long hidden in the recesses of his strong nervous soul, to this little creature at once.

“And what’s your name, my pretty lass?” he said at length, endeavouring, when he had overcome his first emotion, to enter into conversation with the little girl, who still sat upon his knee, his arm closely pressed round her.

“Little Moggie.”

“Imogene,” said the mother, correcting her.

“I like to be little Moggie best,”—the child said, in a low voice.

“Imogene is a prettier name—but I think I like your other name best, too. Why do *you* like it best?”

“Mamma calls me little Moggie when she loves me.”

“And may I call you little Moggie, my pretty lass?”

“When you love me.”

“I do love you.”

“Very much indeed?—and you loved poor papa very much indeed, didn’t you?”—inquired the child.

“More than my own soul,”—said Mr. Glenroy, with much feeling.

“Is that a great, great deal?”

“Yes, my pretty little lass.”

“Imogene, you will tire Mr. Glenroy,” Lady Emma said.

She felt an unaccountable feeling of dislike, not unmixed with jealousy, at seeing her thus placed upon his knee,—and at the sudden sympathy which seemed to have risen up between the two.

Thus reproved, the little girl was hastily getting down.

“Not so, my little lady,”—said he kindly—
“You will not easily tire old Glenroy;—why, you are but as a butterfly upon Ben Lomond. No, Madam,—she does not tire me at all—far from it,—she is a very dear little woman, and will love an ugly old monster for her poor father’s sake. Eh, little Moggie;—is not that so?”

The child answered by a gentle, spontaneous embrace.

She seemed at once to have taken to Mr. Glenroy. The three spectators looked at each other.

It was a cruel trial for poor Emma.—This confusion and contradiction of all her feelings—enough to have embittered a still warmer heart;—She could not but look upon the poor little girl as an usurper—an innocent usurper,—but still to her conviction most assuredly one,—an impostor, a pretender—a something false, untrue, and unnatural. Even the strong instincts of a mother give way before certain impressions,—but oh, the dreadful ruin of the heart's best feelings that in such a case is made.

She could only feel pained and irritated by this mutual liking that had so unexpectedly sprung up between the child and Mr. Glenroy. She felt almost angry with the little girl, as if she were intentionally lending herself to stimulate him to perseverance in the meditated wrong.

She could not bear to see Imogene thus clinging, as it were, to him as her friend and protector.

“Bid Mr. Glenroy good night, Imogene,—and go to your bed—Nurse is waiting for you,”—said the mother, somewhat impatiently.

The little child coloured, as she always did when her mother—as she had but too often done in the misery of the late months—spoke harshly to her, but she instantly slipped down from Mr. Glenroy’s knee and was going off to Nurse, without speaking.—But—

“Don’t be sulky, Imogene,”—said Lady Emma,—“bid Mr. Glenroy, and Mr. and Mrs. Birchell good night, properly.”

At that the little cheek changed to ashy pale, and the poor little girl’s eye fell,—but she did not cry.—She put out her little hand, and said in a very low voice—

“Good-night, Sir.”

“Good-night, my bonny little lassie,”—said Mr. Glenroy, taking her hand once more in his, and bending down and kissing her again, and once again—“God bless thee,—thou art a little dutiful, obedient woman, I see,—God in heaven bless and help thee, my pretty—pretty bairn.”

He then let her go.

She bade good night to Mr. and Mrs. Birchell, the last kissing her kindly, and then was going to her Nurse.

“Are you not going to bid me good night, then?”—said Lady Emma, rather reproachfully.

She turned at this, and came up to her mother ; but, in her perfect simplicity, it was impossible for her to affect what she did not feel ; though, like other children, quick in detecting what is expected of them in the way of demonstration of feeling, she did not, as many children do, endeavour to affect it.—Her kiss was as cold as the one she received, and Lady Emma felt that it was so.

After the little girl was gone,—Mr. Glenroy turned his chair a little away from the rest of the party, and remained without uttering a word for nearly the whole of the remainder of the evening—sitting cross legged, and balancing his foot up and down.

CHAPTER VIII.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the
Chords with might,
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music
Out of sight.

TENNYSON.

THE party separated early.

The evening had been spent unsociably enough.

Lady Emma sat by the fire, reclining in a large deep arm-chair, and lost in melancholy thought—Mrs. Birchell plied her needle by her side, without speaking—Mr. Birchell, at the table, his head resting upon his hand, continued to read—Mr. Glenroy, a little turned away from the rest, scarcely interrupted his deep reverie.

Tea came, and then presently the Birchells rose to go.

“Are you going away so soon, Grace?” said Emma, rousing herself. “It is very early.”

“It is nearly ten o’clock, dear Emma—more than time for us to be going home—and time for you to go to bed—you are thoroughly worn out. This has been a terrible day. You will feel so much more comfortable, body and mind, when you have had a little rest.”

Emma sighed, and slightly pressed her fingers against her heavy, heavy heart.

“Yes—that will be lighter,” said Grace, soothingly.

“Do you think so? No, never!—It will not melt.—It will never melt again.—It is harder and heavier than a stone.”

“Oh, yes! When you have had a little good sleep. It is that you want.”

“Good sleep!—yes—perhaps. I have had not one hour of sweet sleep since”

“Well, then, try for some to-night—and, to

ensure it, go to bed before you are completely wearied out."

"Mr. Glenroy,"—whispered Emma.

"Oh, Mr. Glenroy will excuse you—I am sure."

The sound of his own name awakened him from his fit of abstraction.

"What did you say, Madam?" turning suddenly around.

"Only that it is time Mr. Birchell and I should be going home—and that I think you will unite with me in recommending that Lady Emma should immediately go to bed."

"I hope," he said, "Lady Emma will use no ceremony with me ; but, if she will retire—I, if you please, will walk a little of the way with you. It seems a fine evening."

They went out accordingly together ; whilst Lady Emma, who was most painfully exhausted, tottered up-stairs to her own room.

Mr. Glenroy followed the Birchells through the great hall. They opened the large door, and stood upon the steps, with a feeling almost

of amazement at the excessive beauty of the scene before them.

There, stretched under the rays of a bright moon, the wide extended landscape lay, in that sort of sleepy, hazy half-light and deep shade, which gives such mystery and beauty to nature. The tops of the pendant woods, that hung in such rich abundance upon the sides of the hills, were tinted with the pale light, which gleamed upon the lake below, throwing the foreground of the shore into broad effects of shadow and brightness. The far extended distance was sunk into a mellow indistinctness—bright stars were gleaming round the fair moon, as she glided in all her majesty through the heavens. Not a sound was to be heard but a rustling leaf; the tinkling of a distant sheep bell; and, far, far away, the dull, low beating of the vast hammers of the foundries—which scarcely could be called a sound.

They all stood still and gazed.

“How gloriously beautiful!” cried Grace.

“Splendid!—magnificent!” re-echoed her husband.

Mr. Glenroy alone said nothing; but he stood and gazed.

When Grace ventured to cast a glance at his countenance, she was struck with the expression of it.

It was softened and changed. A deep and serious awe had succeeded to the stern severity of its expression—and this was softened by certain lines of tenderness, such as the face retains when, to borrow the happy thought—*‘l’on voit bien que l’amour a passé par là.’*

And so it had been. That little child had crept into Mr. Glenroy’s heart. He had been united by ties of the deepest friendship with the grandfather;—sympathies strong, though to him almost unaccountable, had bound him still more closely to the son. He seemed, to himself, never to have really loved any one much—perhaps, never any one at all—but those two.

William Aubrey’s death had made his heart

as a blighted desert, and the circumstances which had attended it, had embittered, not to say envenomed, every feeling. He was in that state of stern, hard, dry suffering, perhaps the most difficult of any to endure—when the little child was brought to him.

The innocence and sweetness of the little girl, and a something indescribable which there was about her, few hearts could resist. It was, no doubt, the instinct of her goodness—but this sort of instincts seems to produce their effects, without revealing the cause. To this was added the interest her position had already inspired. His persuasion that, but for his interference, she might have been so dreadfully wronged—the moral indignation he had felt, at what he considered the heartless insensibility of the mother—that chivalry which is aroused in the heart of a manly character, by the idea of resisting oppression in the cause of the helpless—all conspired to render the interest inspired by this dear little girl irresistible.

His heart literally yearned to her. His

affections, in their full tide, once more found a vent. He loved the child at once—as he had loved the father and the grandfather—because he had loved them—and, yet, for herself too. And if anything could have added to the force of this feeling, it was the observation of Lady Emma's involuntary coldness. Nothing interests a stander-by like the suspicion of unkindness or injustice, on the part of parents, towards a child. It seems almost a provision of nature, for the protection of these unfortunates thus deprived.

Mr. Glenroy yielded to the sweet influences, which now filled his soul, without restraint. He had never married, and he was an only child. He had not one single relation nearer than the second cousin, who was heir to his property, and whom he cared little about. He would have been a lonely man upon his remote Highland estate, if it had not been for the part filled in his life by the Aubreys. It was as natural as it was delightful to find the interest still maintained—to have this dear

little creature, not only committed to his charge, but her preservation from hideous disasters, almost entirely owing to him. This last feeling completed the fascination which seemed to have knit his heart to her so closely, that he already felt that henceforward her protection would be the one object—herself the one passion of his life.

We always want to get into the fresh air ;—to expatiate under the infinite vault of heaven ;—to be visibly in and with the infinite :—When the heart is swelling with unwonted emotion ; and, therefore, Mr. Glenroy had walked forth with Mr. and Mrs. Birchell, to seek the relief he desired.

His was a great heart with all its faults.

A strong, rigid, puritan, religious heart—obstinate, proud, one-sided ;—but fearing God, and strictly righteous in its dealings with men.—An idea once taken up, however, was not to be removed ;—and many a hard, and, perhaps, many a virtually unjust action had been done by Mr. Glenroy, under the conviction of his obstinate and unpersuadable self-will.

He was also a man given to violent and unreasonable prejudices.

He had taken a dislike to Mr. and Mrs. Birchell. He looked upon them as the subservient friends—nay, flatterers—of a capricious, romantic, and,—as far as her husband was concerned,—most erring woman; and he could not feel, and he certainly would not show, the least cordiality to them. He looked in stern silence upon this scene of wondrous beauty before him; the natural exclamations of their admiration and pleasure only irritated and annoyed him;—he was, in truth, in that humour when man calls upon “expressive silence,” to muse the praises of the Almighty.

So he slightly touched his hat, and turned another way.

They went home; and he walked, or rather, strode slowly along the lovely terrace walk, which now lay sleeping in all the beauty of the moonlight.

And he again fell into a reverie, musing rather than reflecting.—The figure of that

sweet, innocent child, as she sat there upon his lap, leaning her little head against his bosom, was before him. Again he felt the gentle pressure against his heart, and the soft warmth of that little clasping finger upon his cold, hard hand,—and the whole man was melted.

He had never suffered himself to entertain for a moment the story about Alice Craven ; —he had dismissed the matter at once from his conscience, as a romance, but a most dangerous romance ; and his efforts were directed to prevent, in every possible way, such a pernicious falsehood from getting afloat. He had not lived in a remote part of Scotland all his life, and belonged to an old legendary Scotch family—not to be aware of the bloodshed in olden times, and the misery in more recent ones, that had been produced by such vague and fantastical imaginations. It never once occurred to him to investigate the truth of a story he thus, without a moment's hesitation, rejected. That was one of those

conclusions, at which having arrived, he at once cast the subject aside, resolutely refusing to afford it any re-examination. There was a latent weakness, no doubt, in this pertinacity.—Obstinacy is, in spite of all its apparent strength, the offspring of hidden weakness:—it is the refuge of a will, that wills not the intrinsically true and right;—but what it chooses to regard, as the true and the right.

But enough of this.

I respected Mr. Glenroy in spite of his faults; no one who knew him could well help doing that;—moreover, I, in a manner, loved him, and, if I lay stress on the point, it is because I feel as if I wished to set him right as far as I can, in your good opinion.

You must remember, likewise, that Mr. Glenroy, like many rigid characters of his stamp, was very much given, also, to make favourites;—and, as often happens, too, in such cases, he was used to choose, as his favourites, those who were not other people's favourites.

This disposition, if we were to analyze it, would, I am afraid, prove not to have quite so amiable a source as at first appears.—However, there is much of the sense of justice in it; and so far, so good.

Because Edward Aubrey had been the object of so much unjust partiality, Mr. Glenroy had never liked him; he had, on the contrary, been positively unjust in his judgment of him; and it was upon this account, also, that he had been the more easily prejudiced against Lady Emma, by the highly-coloured exaggerated representations of Alice,—who, in her hatred, had, herself, beheld what had passed, under the influence of that evil eye, which, like a bad glass, discolours and distorts every object.

Her conduct, which had required much explanation to be excused or understood, even by those who loved her best, had, reaching him through this medium, filled his mind with suspicion, distrust, and ill-will.

Still the evident candour of Lady Emma—

the persuasion she was under, that she was right—her simplicity, truth, and honour—could not fail to produce some effect.—Mr. Glenroy began to look upon her as upon one betrayed by an abused imagination, and misled by an infatuated partiality; but still, with more indulgence. For it was impossible to see and speak with her, without the conviction being fixed that her scruples were genuine, and that there was not the slightest pretence, or double dealing upon her part. He found himself forced to respect such scruples,—though he looked with contempt upon their foundation.—All his various feelings, however, upon the subject were centred in the one predominant anxiety—namely, that the secret might be buried in silence.

And so he walked and mused, and the moon shone upon the sleeping landscape;—and the bright, glittering stars of heaven shone down upon him; and the soft, soft night wind gently stirred the branches around and above him; and the drowsy sheep-bell

tinkled; and the deep, sullen beat of the distant hammers mingled like a low bass note, with all.

And Mr. Glenroy walked and mused, as we all love to do. Yet, he thought not of making that rigorous inquiry into his motives, or, as to whether his proceedings were right or wrong, which so few men honestly and with single-mindedness attempt,—and so he walked till the moon was sinking behind the tops of the distant mountains, and then he went and laid his head upon his pillow,—and slept, as he thought, the sleep of the just.

The next day he was up early—went down stairs, and was walking up and down the drawing-room, according to his usual custom, whilst he waited for breakfast, when, the door of the room being open, steps were heard descending the stairs;—the heavy tread of a fat woman, and the light trip of a little child,—

and soon, through the open door, he saw the small mourning figure crossing the hall, her hand in that of her portly Nurse.

Mr. Glenroy approached, and stood in the door-way, watching the retreating form.

“Miss Aubrey, my dear—don’t you see your guardian, Mr. Glenroy?” said Nurse, stopping, when, upon turning round, she became first aware of his presence.—“Go up, and ask him how he is this morning, my precious,—and say you hope he has slept well.—This house is yours—Miss Aubrey, now.—Don’t forget to do your honours.”

“My house!—It’s Mamma’s”

“Well, never mind disputing about that now.—Do as I bid you.”—And she led Imogene up to Mr. Glenroy.

The little girl held out her hand.

“How do you do, Sir—Mr. Glenroy?—I hope you have had a good night?”

Mr. Glenroy laid hold of, but would not relinquish, the little hand. His face was brightened by a gleam of unusual satisfaction, and his

eye glistened ;—he drew the child gently into the drawing-room, Nurse following, and once more placed her upon his knee—and again he looked down upon that sweet face, and gazed upon the lovely infant smile, so expressive of all that was innocent, simple, and good,—and he felt his heart beating fast with strong and strange emotions.—He had never known what it was to be attracted by a creature so beautiful before. That ineffable charm which great loveliness adds to affections which have taken rise in deeper sources, was quite a new feeling to him. The beauty of the little creature added a something inexpressibly delightful to his other feelings.

“What a good, nice little lass you are,”—he said—“to come and speak to me in this pretty way.—Do you know, little lady, that your poor papa has left you to me to take care of—that I am named your guardian ;—do you know what that means ?—you very bonny little lassie.”

“Take care of me !—Mamma takes care of

me, Guardian!—I don't know what is—Guardian."

"To stand to you in your *papa's* place—to take care nobody hurts his little lassie, now he is gone away."

"I've no papa now," she said, sorrowfully.

"Will you try and love me, then, as you did your papa?—you loved him very much."

Mr. Glenroy, I verily believe, had never put love twice together in the same sentence in his life before.

"You're not like my papa—but you are very kind, I think.—Did papa say I must love you?"

"He would wish you to try."

"Then I will try and love you."

"That's right—and now, my little lass, we must begin to get acquainted as fast as we can," Mr. Glenroy went on cheerfully, for he was quite happy with the child upon his knee;—and already so softened by this altogether new and most tender affection, that he might be looked upon as an altered man. "And

so, as I must go a drive out to-day, perhaps you and Mrs. Nurse will come with me—and then you can look about you, and see some new things—and get acquainted with me as we go along.—But first, I must know whether little Missy will be afraid of smoke and noise, and great big chimneys, and black figures of men and women—and panting steam-engines, and thundering hammers.”

The little girl did not suffer Nurse to answer.

“Little Moggie’s never afraid,—and she likes to see things,” she said.

“Well, then, I must go down to Armidale this morning, Nurse,”—Mr. Glenroy went on, turning to Nurse;—“and if the drive will not be too long for little Missy, I should like to take her with me;—it will please the people to see her,”—he added—“if you think she will neither be frightened nor tired.”

Nurse, of course, was delighted at this speech, and the proposal it contained, and answered with much alacrity—

“I am sure it will do Miss Aubrey a world of good,” she was going on.

“Oh! I shall so like—so like it,”—interrupted the little girl, clapping her hands—“It’s such a long, long time, since I have been a ride.”

“Indeed, so it is, Sir,—The poor little dear has been quite moped.—It will be quite a treat—I hope my lady won’t object—but”

“I’ll settle it all with my lady—Mrs. —— what is your name, pray?”

“Watson, Sir”—

“Please, Mrs. Watson, let the little lassie stay with me a wee bit—will you, my bonny child?—and if you see one of my men, tell him to have my carriage out as soon as breakfast is over.”

“And so, little lady,”—began Mr. Glenroy, delighted to be left alone with his treasure—feeling her doubly his own, now he had her quite to himself,—as, indeed, one mostly does, as regards little children.

“And so, little lady—you are not afraid of a scraggy, ugly, big old Scotchman, are you?”

“No,” she said—and she laid her little soft hand confidingly in his.—“You are very kind and loved papa, and I’m not the least afraid.”

“Not, though I’m so big and ugly.”

“You’re not ugly,” she said, fixing her large, intelligent eyes upon his face—“you look so kind.”

The heart of man could not help being gratified at this innocent flattery.

Mr. Glenroy smiled,—

“Then you will not be afraid to go with me and Nurse, you say, and see all the great, noisy, ugly things, we are going amongst—You must know, little lassie, I’m glad of that—because you must be used to them—for they will all belong to you some day or other—Nay, they are yours now, little lady, and you must learn not to be afraid to go among them—for, little as you are, it is better that these people that work for you, should know you and see

you, at times, that they may love those they labour for—if it's only to teach them to work a little for love, and give their rough hearts pleasure,"—he added aside.

"I don't understand,"—the little girl said, fixing her eyes with a perplexed expression upon his.

"Well, my little lass—I don't suppose you can understand much—but it has pleased Him—the great God above," he added, in a tone of solemn awe, that went right to the little girl's heart, "Him who putteth down one, and setteth up another—to give you very large possessions—and you must try to understand, and to remember too—'That to whom much is given, of him much will be required.'—Poor little bodie—but that's an awful way of considering it, though, for so young a one."

The little girl looked only the more and more puzzled—but still as if she were trying to disentangle a meaning.

"Has nobody told you?"—asked Mr. Glenroy.

“Told me—what?”

“That you are Miss Aubrey—a great heiress—very rich, and very great.”

“Yes; Nurse and Mr. Hardman did—but I don’t know what it is.”

“Who’s Mr. Hardman?”

“He’s the butler.”

“And did nobody else?—Was it left to mere dependent menials to break this great truth to you?” exclaimed Mr. Glenroy, with sudden indignation, “then listen, child, to me,” he went on in a manner that filled her little heart with awe—“listen to the guardian appointed by your father—and who, so help me God above, will be to you a second father—listen and understand.”

He lifted her up in his arms, and carried her to the window, which commanded the whole magnificent view.

“All this house—and all these gardens—and flowers and trees—and all those great woods you see there—and that lake of water and the fields, almost as far as your eye can reach, belong to

you—even to that long line of black there ; and all the hills, and hills behind the house, till you get to Sarross Point—and the iron and coal works at Armidale—listen ! do you hear that low thundering noise ?—It is your hammers that are going—mind, child—It was all your father’s—and now it is, every iota of it, yours—and don’t you forget that it is yours—and let nobody—Mamma—or nobody—persuade you to think it anything but yours—for yours it *is*. Look over the land, to the east, and to the west, and to the north, and to the south—for it is given unto thee, my child, to possess it—and God give thee grace” he added, with deep reverence, as he laid his large hand upon the little head—“to rule in justice, truth, and righteousness, over the kingdom which He has given into thine hand.”

It was a large, confused, indistinct idea which was thus presented to her—yet children, at that age, have astonishing power of comprehension—and wonderful strength and nobility of heart — responsive to all that is

great and good.—Little Moggie knew about God—and loved, and tried to serve him too, in her childish fashion. And she understood, too, what righteousness, goodness, and truth were; and, in a vague imperfect way, what it is to be a great lady, and reign, too—for the child was a dreamer over old tales.

The impression Mr. Glenroy wished to convey was made upon her mind. She, in thought, constituted herself, as it were, mistress of her new possessions. She had a perception of the position she was henceforward to occupy. She felt that she was a personage—a something great—and a halo, a kind of glory, seemed to diffuse itself around her idea of little Moggie—All this indistinctly, but strongly—and with the idea of greatness, came the more generous idea of great goodness. The little child determined never to be naughty again—That was the present resolution of her young swelling heart—but other feelings were not long in springing up in it.

CHAPTER IX.

The staring eye, glazed o'er with sapless days,
The long mechanic pacings to and fro,
The set gray life, and apathetic end.

TENNYSON.

IF people would but go back upon themselves, and recollect what they were at five or six years old, they would be ashamed and they would be exalted.

There would be much consolation, a sort of generous pride in recollecting what one was in the freshness of early creation, and life—deep shame at acknowledging what one *is*, after life has been ours to work upon. What has been done with these rich talents of innocence, generous love, and righteousness, — that

directness of judgment, that quick intuitive perception, which make up the wisdom of a young child.—When we do thus count our thoughts back, we are most of us astonished to find, how much was in us at that time ; and yet children are so little demonstrative of their inner notions and feelings, that every child upon whom we look down from an advanced station of life, continues mostly to us only what a child appears upon superficial observation to be.

We take little trouble to observe—and even if we do observe,—it is difficult to penetrate through that outside of infantine playfulness, or apparent dulness and stupidity, and see what is going on in the secret chambers within.

As Imogene stood silent at the window of Mr. Glenroy's chariot, attentively watching every object that passed before her eyes, it was impossible for him, or indeed for any one, to have divined the variety of impressions she was receiving—or what was working within her mind.

The reserve, natural to all thoughtful children, had been greatly increased in her by the life she had led during the last month—almost entirely confined to the company of her silent and serious mother. She had found her almost sole companion in her mute doll, to which she talked a little, but even that only in a low murmur; for she felt in awe of her mother. Suffering and melancholy, which they cannot understand, fill children with much of this silent awe.—The child had lost the habit of prattling to any one but Nurse.

She now stood leaning against the window, drinking in new ideas, with the ardent thirst of awakening intelligence,—but neither moving, speaking, nor giving any external sign of what she was feeling, except as far as this mute attention was one.

It was the first time in her life that she had been taken in this direction.

First they drove through the fine shrubberies, and plantations of Haughton Hall, then between hedges and fertile fields; where

a few autumn flowers still lingered.—Here the scarlet hips, and hawthorn berries hung gay among the red and yellow changing leaves of the wild briar and hawthorn; and the traveller's joy, creeping along the hedges in wild luxuriance, showed its light downy seed plumes; and the verbenas its lovely pink,—and the slow and climbing nightshade its purple fruit.—And the little child thought these hedges perfect wildernesses of beauty.—She drank in this beauty which she as much imagined as saw, with that intense delight, with which children, wrapt in silent quietness,—gather into their hearts such things.

But as they proceeded, this wealth of vegetation gradually began to diminish. The trees looked stunted and unhealthy; the hedges ragged and broken; the sloe was without fruit;—and a few rare, half-blackened berries hung among the scanty leaves of the wretched looking hawthorns.—The wild briar and the traveller's joy were seen no more; and the flowers were all gone,

except a few bunches of yellow ragwort, that still straggled along the way side.—The carriage descended a steep hill, and then it wound round the foot of an opposite ascent, and as it advanced the hills seemed to close, and the valleys to narrow. At length, thick columns of smoke might be seen in the distance, rising in columns and obscuring the clear blue of the sky—and gradually the valley, whose course they were following, became grim and dark, and the air was thick with smoke, and save now and then a blackened scrub,—or ragged bush, or knot of coarse grass, and still never failing ragwort—all vegetation had disappeared.

The child said nothing, but turned and looked upon Mr. Glenroy, as if for explanation. He had been during all this time watching her with the greatest interest.

He made no answer to the mute appeal, and she turned to the window again.

But now the windings of the road brought them round the last spur of the hills, and the

whole scene opened before them. The way carried them to the almost precipitous edge of a deep valley, or rather glen, beneath the level of the one they had followed, and filled with all the accessories of mining industry.

There were huge steam-engines, smoking and clattering, and hissing—lifting up and letting fall their enormous sea-serpent heads with a monstrous and stunning force. Huge horizontal wheels, black as soot, at the head of the mining shafts, were turning with slow endless motion; heaps of coal and iron ore—fires were burning, volumes of smoke rising and casting a lurid shadow upon everything—clattering chains, rattling carriages running to and fro on the tram-roads—falling waters—at intervals loud explosions from blasted rocks were heard—men, black as demons and looking almost like the inhabitants of a cyclopean world, were passing to and fro amid the smoke, the chain, the wheels, and fires. Busy industry everywhere, but in one of its forms most repulsive to a loving, woodland-fed, imaginative heart.

The child's countenance was clouded over with a mixture of disgust and fear—yet there was a certain awe mingled, for such scenes have a grandeur in them. The bleak, barren, frowning hills that girdled in this glen, traversed by inky paths so steep that they seemed inaccessible—the gloomy barrenness and dark atmosphere around, approached to the sublime.

Certainly such scenes in mountain districts are far less repulsive than in the wide extended plains and long sweeping hills of some parts of England.

“Well, my little lassie—and what do you think of it all?”

The child seemed almost too much stunned and confused to answer. Suddenly an expression of acute pain came into her face, for they had now approached a line of wretched houses, before whose doors ragged, miserable, barefooted children were scrambling about; and scolding, ill-favoured dirty mothers, their hair hanging in tangled masses from their ragged

caps—their features perfectly begrimed with the smoke—were passing in and out. One had just seized hold of a little child that was paddling in a dirty puddle, and with shrill voice, and the aspect of a fury, had lifted up her hand to punish the small offender, who shrieked desperately for mercy. The shriek was answered by the child in the carriage, who flung herself upon Mr Glenroy's breast in a transport of horror. He shouted to the servants, and the carriage stopped.

“What's the matter, my woman?” he called out, addressing the virago. “What has the wee bairn done? Don't slay thine own flesh and blood, Jenny, for nothing.”

The woman looked up; the blow was arrested; the closed fingers were loosened by surprise—the child ran away, and hid itself. The woman continued to stare at the carriage, and at the stranger's face, which appeared at the window.

“What's the matter, good woman?” repeated Mr. Glenroy. “Do you think it's any use to flyht a poor bairn in that way?”

“Flyht! what’s flyht?” said the woman, sulkily. “The child’s always a-going into the puddle-hole, there; and who’s to clean him but myself, I’d like to know?”

And half insolently, half sulkily, she turned away and re-entered her house. The door stood wide open; as the carriage remained standing there, you could see within.

What a scene of dirt and confusion, and squalid misery, was displayed! Not that I intend to say that this is usually the case with all colliers’ and miners’ dwellings. I have never seen any dwellings of the working classes more scrupulously neat, more filled with all those little luxuries and ornaments, which are the evidences of well-doing among such—than I have observed in some houses prepared by wives and mothers for the reception of these grim, sooty sons of the earth; but this too often is not the case. Where there is slovenly indolence upon the part of the woman, or habits of drinking upon that of the man; nothing can exceed the squalid wretched-

ness that may be found in the dwellings of our mining or manufacturing districts.

The picture I have now before my eyes belongs to a period some years ago, when, certainly, there was much less pains taken by masters to improve the condition of their workmen than what is to be met with now. At that time, with few exceptions, things went on in general, much as they were going on at the time I am describing in Armidale. The proprietor left the direction to the head manager, who might be called in this case an inferior partner; not sharing profits indeed, but having, in addition to his salary, a percentage upon the profits, which amounts in its moral effects to much the same thing. The head manager, however, in this case, was one who—provided the work were well done, and no outrageous acts of vice or disorder committed—was satisfied with things as they went on, and never troubled his head about what at that time of day he would have called the ‘cant of progress:’ and William Aubrey, though for a few gene-

rous and munificent actions he had obtained a character for benevolence—which at this time of day we should think he little deserved—had been too much occupied by his self-misery to pay any serious or continued attention to the subject. Still less had an idea of this duty occurred to Lady Emma, who had been educated to overlook such subjects—as people too often were in those days. It had never occurred to either to reflect upon the enormous weight of responsibility that lay upon them—upon the pressing nature of reciprocal obligations and duties—upon what they, refined, educated, cultivated, with every means that intellect, leisure, and wealth could give for the benefiting the almost brute masses that lay around them—owed of care and guidance, to those who were labouring at their charge.

Provided the wage was duly and liberally paid, they looked no further. All obligation, in their eyes, was thus discharged—and so, no doubt, the positive obligation of justice was—

and they little thought of the new, and much more all-embracing law—that law of comprehensive love, which makes every one of these rude colliers a neighbour and brother.

They lost almost as much as their dependants by this indifference and blindness. Conceive these two working together from a sense of imperative duty—from a disinterested desire for the good of others—and reflect upon the bond of union it would have created between them.

Oh, when the rich and powerful give themselves to labour for the ignorant and miserable! Their possessions and immunities and accomplishments become, indeed, gracious gifts of God! The consequence of this inattention of duty, of course, was, that this large district of Armidale collieries was in a most neglected condition.

“They don’t seem particularly canny gude wives, Nurse,” remarked Mr. Glenroy to the companion who sat beside him. “I don’t see as how there’s much room for ye English

people to reproach our Scotch gude wives with being slovens."

"But what can you expect, Sir—in the collieries and iron works?" remonstrated Nurse—"Miss Aubrey, my dear—will you like to come and sit upon my knee?"

"The child seems quite scared," thought Nurse to herself—"I cannot think what bewitched Mr. Glenroy to bring the poor little creature here."

"No, thank you," said the little girl—and continued to stand at the window, watching.

"I want to find Mr. Standish—the head manager," said Mr. Glenroy to a man who happened to pass by—"Will you give my postillion directions as to the right way?"

The man proceeded to give the directions in the usual complicated style—"Turn to the left, and then go straight forwards; and when you pass the 'Three Jolly Colliers'—that's the little alehouse—why then, turn to the right, and so take the bigger road," &c. &c.

Whilst he was endeavouring to make him-

self understood, various loiterers—men, boys, girls, and children—had gathered round the carriage. The handsome equipage—the chariot, with Mr. Glenroy’s shield, and its innumerable quarterings upon a splendid mantle, all ermined and looped with gold upon the panels—but far more than all, the beautiful little girl, clad in deep mourning, that stood and looked out of the window, excited universal interest and curiosity.

“Who’s carriage mun that be?—It’s not th’ old master’s—*That* was dark blue—and this orange like—and who’s th’ chil’t?—It can’t be—*the* chil’t—aye, but it is—It’s Master Glenroy—he as is named executor and guardian under th’ will—and that’s the chil’t—sure enough, in th’ carriage with him”—were the questions and answers bandied about.—The intelligence relating to the disposition of the will, so far at least, had already reached Armidale.—“And sure,—but is it *not* a pretty creature?” was added with a burst of instinctive loyalty.

Loyalty to the beautiful, young, and helpless!—How sweet it is!—There was not a heart among these rude colliers but swelled to the delicate and beautiful little child—their future Queen. Every one among them was, for the moment, the better, for the tenderness of that admiration with which she filled them. They were softened by her beauty, her innocence, and her infancy.—They were the better for loving beauty, innocence, and a child.—Every single feeling of this sort helps and advances, and purifies the man.

Mr. Glenroy understood, by the instinct of his own heart, what was going on.—He was already the better for loving this little one—He felt that every rough *Proletaire* among the crowd around would be the better for it, too.—He was proud of, and pleased with, the sensation thus created.—It happened to be the hour of rest, and when the gangs of miners were changing—so there were more people about than usual.

Mr Glenroy put his head to the side-window,

and looked round.—A man came up and took off his hat.

“If you please, Sir,” he said, “and I may make so bold—you be Mr. Glenroy, ben’t you—and that’s the little lady as is to reign over us?”

“Right—I am Mr. Glenroy—and I have brought down this bonny little wee thing—that you may all see her, and that she may see you.—Yes, sure enough! Reign over you she will—so please the Great Ruler above—She is the heiress to all her father’s possessions—and a sweeter bud never promised to blossom to a rose.”

The people crowded round.

“These are *your* people—These are the workmen that go deep into the ground, where it is very cold and very dark, to work for *you*. They used to go into the ground to work for your father,—and now they are going to do it for *you*.”

“I’m afraid of ’em”—she whispered, drawing back, and clinging to Mr. Glenroy.

“But you mustn’t be afraid of them—my wee lassie—for they love you—and work for you.”

“But they are so black and ugly.”

“That’s because they go into the dark ground, to fetch out coal to make fires for you, dear,” put in Nurse.—“It’s all for you—to make fires and money for *you*.”

“But do they like going into the dark ground?”—whispered the little girl, pale and agitated—half afraid—very sorry—and very much stunned and surprised;—“because, if they don’t—don’t let ’em go for me—I don’t want ’em to.”

“They don’t mind the dust and cold as you would, little one—they are big men, you see—big men are not afraid of dirt and cold—they are all big men.”

Mr. Glenroy forgot the poor little children, sitting prisoners in the mines, for hours every day, to shut and open doors.

“Don’t they mind?—I’m glad—but I’m sorry.”

“Sorry! For why?”

“’Cause they *can’t* like it.”

Mr. Glenroy pressed the little creature to his bosom for a moment,—then he said—

“But there is one thing they will all like—they will like very much to look at you;—and if you will put your little face to the window—and say—‘My men, I’m very glad to see you—and I hope you are all very well’—It would make them so glad.”

“Would it?”

“They would not care for the cold and dark after that.”

“Wouldn’t they?—Oh! I’m so glad!—Put me to the window.”

“My men”—(prompting her)—

“My men,”—began the sweet childish voice—and there was a pause of expectant silence—

“I’m very glad to see you. . . .”

“I’m very glad to see you.”

“And I hope you are all very well.”

“And I hope you are all very well—and

don't be frightened at going into the nasty dark ground for me."

And, with the triumph of a little child at having achieved a great enterprise, and added somewhat of its own to another's dictation,—she turned round and hid her face playfully in the breast of Mr. Glenroy's coat.

He could have devoured her.

"Very well—that's a good little lass.—Drive on, coachman."

The carriage moved on—the crowd cheered,—The noise made the little child tremble;—she still kept her face hidden in the breast of his coat, and he put his arm round her and pressed her to him—feeling all the time such a world of new, sweet, unaccustomed, sensations! Such a paradise of sweets was opened up by this strong, strange love,—seeming somehow sweeter than even a father's love!—and perhaps it was so.—A stranger's love of this sort, once excited, has a peculiar interest in it. Besides, he was alone in the world, and she seemed alone in the world, too.—On

his side, at least, there were no rival affections to divert this current of feelings.

The shouting ceased, and the little girl's spirits returned.

"Now," said Mr. Glenroy,—“do you know you have been a very good child—trying to do what you were told it was right to do,—and you have made a great many people happy,—and a thought has come into my head—You have given them a happy minute—you shall give them a happy day.—Would it not be a bonny thing to make a great feast, and ask all these people who work for you to come and eat a good dinner?”

“A feast!—A real feast!”—cried the child.

Little birthday feasts were the only feasts she had ever seen, or had any idea of, pretty thing!—but a child's imagination always rises very high at the idea of a feast.

“Oh! that would be so nice!”

“Yes,” said Mr. Glenroy—“I do think it would be very nice,—for, do you see, my bairn, these houses are not like your great

house at Haughton—and these ugly clothes are not like your clothes,—and these little boys and girls never get a feast, and sometimes not enough to eat.”

“But—but,”—eagerly—“why have they bad houses, and ugly clothes, and not enough to eat?—*I’ve* enough.”

“Everybody can’t have enough.”

“Can’t they?—Why can’t they—they ought.”

“Ah!” thought Mr. Glenroy—“here we are, at the very onset, stumbling upon the great problem, which puzzles us all,—how much more does it offend the sense of justice in an innocent child!” He did not exactly know what to say.

“They *ought* to have dinners,”—pursued the little reasoner,—“haven’t they dinners?”

“Not always.”

“But *why* haven’t they?”—I’ll give them some of my dinner.—I’ve dinner every day—always.”

“Yes, so you shall,—we will try and see

whether they cannot all have dinners every day," Mr. Glenroy said, to pacify her, and sighed at the impotence of the promise.

The events of this day made an indelible impression upon little Imogene.

They had pursued their way to the Head Manager's house, amidst scenes of new desolation and that dreary desert of hideous barrenness, common to such districts ;—and the little heart, with dismay, looked upon what appeared to her so indescribably terrible and wretched.

The impression she so early received was never effaced. It was all the stronger, for the sort of confused darkness of the picture. But with this sense of wretched gloom and dirt overhanging it—the most tender pity was awakened—and the most generous and intense desire to do something to make them all *white* and happy.

Children of little Moggie's age are perfectly capable of such reflections and aspirations.

CHAPTER X.

Smiling and loving— hoping still—
Ne'er cherishing a thought of ill,
Judging men's spirits by thine own.

MRS. ACTON TINDAL.

THE child was pensive and silent all the way home. In truth, her little heart was full to overflowing. When she came in, she was led up into her nursery, to have her things taken off.

It was a beautiful day. The nursery windows stood wide open, and the fresh breeze blew refreshingly in—as the curtains waved up and down, giving glimpses of the beauteous landscape outside.

The little girl scarcely spoke, as Nurse was taking off her bonnet and little cloak ; but remained in a silence quite unlike her usual prattling habits—for her heart was naturally open and unreserved, as are hearts strong and simple at once.

When her small toilette was finished, her hair smoothed, and all made ready to go down to Mamma, Nurse asked her to sit down and wait awhile, as she had a few things to do first. The child took her tiny stool, and sat down at the window and looked out ; and, as she looked out, she mentally contrasted the glorious scene before her, with the dreamy aspect of wretchedness of the one she had just visited—and the young, thoughtful, heart was very much puzzled.

This child had already been instructed in the rudiments of religion, and she thought a vast deal upon the subject.

People, who do not remember distinctly—of which I think are the majority—what passed in their minds at this early age, may probably

look upon this as quite precocious and unnatural in my little favourite—who, I beg to say, was not in the least precocious, but as sweetly genuine a child as any I ever knew. She seemed to belong to those—if, with great reverence, I may presume, in such a work as this, to allude to the beautiful and touching incident—whom the divine Saviour took in His blessed arms, declaring that ‘of such was the kingdom of Heaven.’

Little Moggie had sat many and many an half-hour since the days, as we may call them, of her affliction began—dating from the hour her poor mother discovered the fatal secret, which had shipwrecked all she possessed of happiness. Often and often had little Moggie sat silent and sad, infected with a sort of sympathetic melancholy, imbibed, she knew not why, from the sadness of her mother. Often and often, too, had she sat upon that very little stool which she now occupied, looking out over this lovely view. To her fresh perceptions, it was steeped in a living beauty,

which, as we grow older, and our sensibilities have lost something of their first delicacy, we are no longer able to taste. And thus had she often remained silent and quiet, thinking of that great, great God whom she had learned to know.—Wondering, and longing to see and to know better, that Being whose dwelling was beyond the measureless arch of blue which spread above her head—whose infinite depths the childish eye vainly strove to penetrate. Often, when Mamma looked more sorry and was more silent than usual, would her pitying young eyes be fixed upon her, drinking in the impression of that sad, wearied, beautiful face, till her little heart was ready to break.

She would come into her nursery, sit down upon the little stool at the window and dwell upon this melancholy picture; and then she would remember little texts out of the Testament, which had impressed her young heart more especially—and these were usually such as speak of the tender pity of our Saviour to the

sorrowful and broken-hearted of this world of misery, the existence of which misery so perplexes a thoughtful child.

Little Moggie was not, therefore, unaccustomed—young as she was—to seek light and comfort, where all, from the least to the greatest, may find it. And now, as she sat at this window, looking over the beautiful world of God, stretched out in all its splendid variety of forms and tints, towards the wide encircling horizon before her—she felt it very wonderful that God, who is all good and all mighty, should make such an ugly world as the one behind the hills. That wonder it was impossible to satisfy—but the pain of it was softened by the recollection of the good Saviour, who came to help the poor, and to feed the hungry. And then she recollected that He had ordered everybody to do the same; and she wondered, again and again, why these poor people were ever allowed to be hungry, when she saw that at her home there was so much and to spare; and she resolved, again and again, that, when

she was bigger—it should not be one feast, as Mr. Glenroy proposed, though that would be very nice—but everybody should have dinner every day.

“Mamma,” said little Imogene, as at length Nurse, having finished what she was about, had taken her down to Lady Emma’s sitting-room—“Mamma, I’ve had such a long drive.”

Her spirits were cheered by the fresh air; and, besides, Lady Emma stretched out her arms to receive her, as she entered the room, with an expression of pleasure not to be mistaken, and which restored the poor little thing’s old feelings of confidence.

“Mamma—I’ve have had such a long drive.”

“Have you, my love?—Where have you been?”

“Oh! such a long, long way—over hills and hills, such monstrous hills—and down into

such nasty black valleys and holes—and seen such poor, poor, dirty people; and it's all mine, Mr. Glenroy says—all these monstrous hills are all mine—and these poor dirty people all work for me—and I'm so sorry. They are in the ground all day. So we're going to give them a great feast—arn't you very glad?"

"Did Mr. Glenroy tell you all this?—What did he tell you, little Moggie?" asked Lady Emma, taking the child upon her lap, and her face immediately assuming its usual air of serious, almost severe, anxiety and dissatisfaction.

But she had called her little Moggie, that was enough for the child—who pressed her small head tenderly against her mother's bosom.

"What did Mr. Glenroy tell my little Moggie?"

"Oh! he told me such a many things—that all this beauty great house, and on and on—over all the woods and the fields, is

mine—and I must mind and remember it is mine—and all the monstrous ugly hills are mine, too—and that they are very ugly, but they are full of what makes money—and those poor, black, dirty men and women, work in dark, horrid places, to get out coals and iron—that makes knives and spades for me—and there are great big chimneys, puffing away and making things, all day long—but the men and women are so black and dirty!—and they scold the little children, because they don't do as they are bid—and often they don't get enough to eat, and sometimes nothing at all—and they are bad, and dirty, and don't learn lessons—but Mr. Glenroy says, because they work for me that I may have dinners—it is my business to see that they are not hungry, and idle, and cross, and don't learn lessons—and that when I am bigger, I shall—and when I am bigger, I am sure I will—for God, Mr. Glenroy says, hates rich people who only think about having dinners and pretty things themselves, and don't care for people

that work for them—and so he does—And the Lord Jesus ordered those who had money, to feed the hungry, and to clothe the naked—and I am sure I will—that I will with *all my heart.*”

This childish harangue gushed forth in a murmuring torrent of sweet words—not to be interrupted, had there been any wish upon the part of Lady Emma to interrupt it;—but she was silent, deeply affected, struck to the soul, listening with feelings of mingled compunction and dismay.

Were these the sentiments with which this young being entered upon that doubtful inheritance, of which she was striving to deprive her?

Was this the spirit, in which the descendant of the guilty Alice Craven, and her guilty son, almost equally guilty, though in a different way, entered upon that inheritance, which, through such a fearful injustice, she seemed about to receive?—And, even in this short time, had all her precautions proved vain; and

had the little imagination been filled with dreams of greatness and power, from which it would be so fearful to awaken her, when the time of awakening should come—as come Lady Emma felt assured it must and would. With this distress was mingled an acute pang of remorse.

Was this the lesson given by a child? This being, in whose behalf a wrong so insupportable was, perhaps, about to be perpetrated. Were these her ideas of the true use of riches? Whence derived?—Oh, not from her—not from her mother, returned the humbled and repenting heart.

“I have lived these many years close beside this scene of vice and misery—and what have *I* done?”

“Have I ever visited—ever thought of doing good there?”

“Have *I* gone among them to learn their wants, and striven to help these outcasts of civilization?”

“No! Ah, No!”

She had been absorbed in her own circle of

sorrows, vexations, and feelings—selfishly absorbed—and every obligation more remote, had been utterly and altogether left undischarged.

What William might have done—she did not know—to her shame be it spoken, she did not even know so much as that.

She was conscience-stricken—ashamed—confounded—

Well might Alice Craven feel for her that ill-disguised contempt which she betrayed—she might well and justly feel it as for one utterly spoiled and selfish. She had felt indignant at what she thought a great injustice, for she knew that her heart was generous and good ;—but what mattered that? What had her actions been?

She remained silent ; but a little gentle pressure encouraged the child, who, throwing her arms round her mother, and looking lovingly into that face, in which she read a something that it warmed her little heart to read, went on—

“The men were without coats, and had great white sleeves tucked up to their shoulders, and their arms so dirty and grim, and they frightened me with their black faces, and made a great noise,—and I was very near crying, but I didn’t—and Mr. Glenroy said I must make a speech to them.”

“My goodness!—He did!—and did you?”

“Yes; I tried, because he said they would like it very much.”

“And what *did* you say?”

“Oh, I said what Mr. Glenroy bade me. I don’t quite remember; but it began ‘My men,’—and said I was glad to see them; and I said, of my own self, I was very sorry they had to work in the dark ground for me, because I am——”

“And what did they say?”

“Oh, they shouted and shouted, and seemed so glad;—but it was such a noise, I couldn’t help being frightened a wee bit.”

“My dear little love, suppose all this should be a dream,” said Lady Emma, with unusual

gentleness, for her heart was quivering with different emotions.

“Oh, it’s not a dream.—They’re real men and women, Mamma——”

“But suppose, I mean, that it should be a mistake about all that Mr. Glenroy told you.”

The child lifted up her eyes, and looked in Emma’s face, as if she did not, in the least, understand her.

“Suppose, I mean, that Mr. Glenroy should have been mistaken, when he said that all these fine things belonged to you, Imogene, and that they are none of them yours at all.”

The child’s countenance fell.

All her little castles of benevolence, which she had erected with so much innocent delight, melted, like the baseless fabric of a vision, into thin air, indeed !

“Mr. Glenroy would be very naughty, if he told me a story,” she said, gravely.

“He did not intend to tell you a story.” began Lady Emma, anxiously—“He thinks what he said was true, and that all these

things *are* your own; but, perhaps, he is mistaken.—Little Moggie,” she said, very seriously, “must understand this;—perhaps Mr. Glenroy may be mistaken: and, then not one thing of all these would belong to her.”

The perplexity into which this revelation threw the mind of the child can scarcely be conceived. She could, in the happy indifference of her age, have received the intelligence, that she possessed nothing, with the philosophy of one ignorant of the value of that which she was called upon to relinquish; but, not to know whether it was, or was not so—whether she was this princess of a fairy tale, as it seemed to her, —or a poor little girl, who had nothing at all, like some of the other personages in the same fairy tales,—threw her whole mind into confusion. I do not know what she would have done, if, to her relief, the confusion had not settled, as it were, round one thought.

“Then shan’t they have my feast——?”

“Your feast, child!”

“Yes ; Mr. Glenroy promised me I should give them all a feast. . . . They never have grand things and feasts,” she added, in a sort of whispering confidence, — clinging to her mother, as if in her mother’s power it lay to gratify her or not—“and I’ll be so sorry if they haven’t their feast.”

Mr. Glenroy looked seriously displeased, when next he and Lady Emma met.

“Madam,” he began, rather abruptly, “my powers as joint guardian with yourself, are more extensive than you are possibly aware of.”

He had become acquainted with what had passed between Lady Emma and her little girl—the child, indeed, had met him as she was returning from her mother’s room, and running up to him with all the confiding affection with which he had already contrived to inspire her, had asked him—whether it was a mistake that

they were her hills and her men—and whether the poor people might not have their feast.

“It’s no mistake, my little woman,”—he said, again lifting her in his arms, and carrying her to a window at the end of the corridor in which they met. — “Mark me! my lassie—People often make mistakes—but *I* don’t make mistakes—what I tell you is *true*.—All this house, and all those fields and woods, to that dark line there—do you see it?—and the hills we went over to day, are *yours*—and nobody else’s—and don’t you let any body take them away from you, when you are bigger—but hold them fast—and be a good lassie, and feed the hungry, and clothe the naked—Freely thou hast received, freely give—and I am a fool, and an old dotard, if thou dost not make such a queen over all this, as the county of—— has not seen for many a long day.”

He restored her to Nurse, and then went and knocked at Lady Emma’s door; for he was much chafed, and was impatient to give out his mind to her.

“ My powers, as joint guardian with yourself, may be more extensive than you are aware.”

“ I do not mean to dispute them, Sir,” she replied, gravely,—“ I may be hurt at—and I may deeply lament, my husband’s want of confidence in me—I may think it hard—cruel—that a stranger should intermeddle between me and my child—but I submit, and I am at a loss to conceive how I may have given occasion for this somewhat sudden assertion of your powers.”

“ Madam, I think you are doing what is very unadvised and wrong—and you have taken an imprudent step, as regards the child, without consulting me.”

“ As how, Sir?—Am I to be controlled in any steps I choose to take, as regards my little girl?”

“ Undoubtedly, such is my intention, if the steps be such, in my opinion, as will interfere with her true happiness and best interests.—Nay, more—with the right formation of her character.—Madam, it is impossible to say,

what a miserable ruin may be made of that child's disposition—her earnest temper, and noble heart,—by the contradictory ideas to which you would make her a prey.—Only look upon your own distress and perplexity—contrast it with the tranquility which attends upon a clear and determined course such as mine. I ask you to reflect, which state is the one to be desired for a young child—and I would ask you to picture to yourself the frightful confusion to which the uncertainty as to her rights would expose her.—*If*," he said, impressively, "I had any doubt as to this child of William Aubrey's being the undoubted heiress of this, his property, I might hesitate too, as to the course to be pursued—but, as, in my opinion, there is not a tittle of evidence in existence, which can fairly shake her title—or ought to produce the shadow of a doubt in any unprejudiced mind. I hold it to be a course so miserably mistaken and wrong, to harass her young mind with the scruples, which unhappily distress your own,—that I make it the

condition of leaving her under your care, that I have your solemn promise that this fatal secret be kept inviolably from her knowledge.—*I will not suffer* this fair promise of future excellence—this earnest of happiness and good—to be blighted by the effect which irritating, perplexing, slightly-grounded scruples, might throw over her young years.—Till she is of age—for so long my authority lasts—I forbid it.—Afterwards, her mother may do as she pleases.—Her young mind promises to have strength enough by that time to resist the evil influence of sophistry—and to decide between contradictions.”

“Slightly grounded!—You admit, then, the existence of some ground, at least,” was Lady Emma’s remark.—She seemed to seize upon that one idea, and to overlook the remainder of the speech.

Mr. Glenroy’s countenance grew darker.

“Did your ladyship do me the honour to give your attention to the rest of what I said?”

“Oh ! if there are grounds, however slight—if, however slight, you admit their existence—how can you—how is it possible to lend yourself where there is a possibility you may be mistaken—as you, yourself, now admit—how can you lend yourself to the possibility of perpetrating such a wrong?”

“I beseech you, Madam, to make an end of this: that subject is with me laid at rest. In a case like the present, the mind must come to some decision or other.—I have made mine.—It is the one at which, I am firmly persuaded, every straightforward, well-balanced mind would arrive. The matter must not be left in a most injurious uncertainty, for the sake of all most nearly concerned. Either the child is the heiress, and as such must be considered and treated—or she is not. I am persuaded that the right is hers ; and, being so persuaded, will maintain her in it—and, having so resolved, I have come to another resolution ; and that is, that I will not suffer her mind to be disturbed, her peace to be shipwrecked, and the

conscience rendered diseased, by vain doubts and endless scruples. *I will not* allow this fatal blight to fall upon so fair a flower ; and, therefore, it is the condition, and the indispensable condition, upon which I yield up my guardianship into the hands of the mother—that I have that mother’s solemn promise never in any way whatsoever, to give the child the slightest suspicion of the peculiar situation in which she stands.”

“ The condition seems an impossible one,” said Lady Emma, looking scared and miserable, and pale and wretched in the extreme. “ How can Mr. Glenroy impose upon any fellow-creature a life-long of falsehood and deceit? Does he not think that such an obligation may render it impossible for me to do justice by this child myself? How can I undertake an education of which truth ought to form the indispensable basis ;—upon a foundation, which I firmly believe—which I may say I *know*—to be so hollow. It is impossible.—Every act, every sentence, would be darkened

and distorted by this medium of falsehood.— Oh, Mr. Glenroy—we may differ—we do differ as to the facts and bearings of this most distressing case,—but let us, at least, in this horrible confusion—hold fast by one guiding star. Let us be truthful as far as we can—and let us be sincere with this innocent child—to deceive *her* is the most dreadful part of it all.”

Mr. Glenroy was a righteous and sensible, but he was also an obstinate, self-willed man, who rarely listened to any reason but his own, or to the dictates of any other conscience but his own;—yet the earnest sincerity with which Lady Emma spoke—that deep reverence for justice and truth—which, whatever faults and errors he might accuse her of, she displayed in every word and action, touched him, and a sentiment of respect began to arise in his breast, which was strengthened every hour he passed with her.

This inherent truthfulness was the excellent foundation of a character which unfortunate circumstances had rendered, in many respects,

so imperfect : it was an anchor which held her firmly attached to the true rock, in spite of all the variations of her excitable, imaginative, and imperfectly disciplined temperament.

He did not reply for some time ; at last he said, with an air of more cordiality than he had yet assumed—

“ There is much in what you urge, Madam.—I see that I had too hastily decided upon this question.—It requires time and examination before absolutely determining upon the course to be pursued.—Certainly, this little child must not be brought up under the shadow of a lie.”

Poor Emma’s countenance brightened. A gleam passed over it—one bright gleam of the sunshine of better days.

“ Oh, truth !—truth !—Only the truth,” she said, earnestly.

“ Ah, Madam !—but, as Pilate asked—what is truth ?”

“ It is evident enough to me,” said Emma, sadly.

“And that, Madam,” cried Mr. Glenroy, again aroused and irritated by this positive reassertion of that which he was resolved not to admit—“that, Madam—it is *just* that, which makes such a dogged self-willed brute of me.—Nothing under heaven provokes me like the obstinacy of women—that obstinacy—under pardon—in which they take refuge, when they are in danger of being overcome by reasoning they cannot refute. Let a woman once resolve to believe a matter, and those may beat the notion out of her head who can. I never saw the man who could do it. Why, my lady, you speak as if this abominable invention were an unquestionable fact—as if there could be no doubt as to how the justice of the case lay, so a man were but candid enough to admit it.—You forget, what I have repeated, times innumerable, that I do not attach the slightest credit to the ravings of a woman driven mad by grief and rage,—if, indeed, her expressions in that moment of distress and agony, when analyzed, even bear the interpretation you are pleased to put

upon them—which, I think, without offence to any one, may fairly be questioned.—The property of most men would rest upon very insecure foundations, if the assertions of any distracted and possibly malignant creature like this, were to be allowed to deprive us of our birthrights—or rob a child of the heritage of its ancestors. Why, Madam, society could not exist upon such terms.—Moreover, I am much deceived in my impressions, if, even granting that this insane and most malignant falsehood were to be acted upon—I doubt whether it would make any difference.—William Aubrey derives his estate from an express testamentary disposition not only by inheritance as next of kin,—and the child's title in this view of the subject, is, I believe you will find, not to be shaken."

She felt, as we all feel, when brought into contact with characters of Mr. Glenroy's sort. The influence she had exercised was but momentary—like the distension of some highly elastic substance, which almost instantaneously returns to its original form.

The last observation, however, had not been made before it instantly struck her afresh—as aggravation of the wrong. That varying expressive countenance of her's assumed a look of almost indescribable reluctance and distress, but she forced herself to ask, though in a trembling voice—

“Is Mr. Glenroy aware of the circumstances under which the will he alludes to was made?”

“Yes,” said he.

“Of *all* the circumstances?” her pale troubled face leaning forward, and fixing her eyes upon him.

“Of course—Why, Madam, do you ask, and with so much distress in your countenance? It was a painful story—but I, for one, never questioned the wisdom and justice of Mr. Aubrey's decision. They were twin brothers, after all—and besides, there is an end of it—for the other man is dead.”

She sighed, and cast her eyes in a sort of deprecating manner round her—as if seeking help to disentangle the web of error in

which everything seemed involved. Her voice trembled more and more; it was lower than ever, and almost inarticulate, as she whispered rather than spoke—

“I believe you *are* ignorant, as I *was*.”

“The story was, unhappily, too public a one for any one to remain in the dark as to the leading facts,” said he, with indifference; “and I was, I believe, the man who enjoyed more of Mr. Aubrey and William Aubrey’s confidence than any other in the world.”

“But did he ever? oh! did he never?” almost gasping for breath, as she spoke—“Did William Aubrey never confess? Oh! that he had—but, alas!—alas! I see that he never did—did he never confess his great sin? Oh! fool that I was to hope it! No—no—I see he never, never did—how could he? It was left to me to do it—the burden of it falls upon me—poor creature!” and the tears rose fast to her eyes. “Oh, Mr. Glenroy, that it should be I who have to tell it!”

He looked at her with a cold astonishment,

and a severity of aspect which would have daunted a less fervent character—as in a hoarse, faltering whisper, she went on to relate the fatal discovery she had made.

As she proceeded, there was an evident change in the countenance of the listener—his eyes darkened, and his cheek grew very pale.

In spite of all the prejudices against Lady Emma with which Alice Craven had succeeded in filling his mind, there was, as I have said, an impress of truth about her, and a single transparent sincerity, which was irresistible. He felt this now. Fain would he have disbelieved the painful story—it could not be—to doubt her veracity was impossible.

“It ought to be as painful to you to tell me this, as it is for me to hear it,” was all he said.

“It *is*,” she answered from her heart.

“I believe you,” was all he answered.

And he laid his large bony hand upon her’s, so wasted and so delicate in its beauty—and

pressed it as iron might have pressed wax—but though the slender fingers seemed crushing within the grasp, the heart felt its meaning, and was a little comforted.

There was the sympathy of mutual pain expressed by it.

Mr. Glenroy was, indeed, suffering intense mental pain.

“But he is dead—the injured man is dead—He died unconscious of the heavy injury.”

“He rushed to the precipice under the goadings of a father’s curse,” she said, and shuddered.

“But he was spared the pain you and I, Madam, feel now—and that was much”—added Mr. Glenroy, with the look and accent of one struggling to support with composure an almost insupportable anguish.

“He is dead”—he repeated again—as if there was a species of satisfaction in that persuasion.

“Have you not heard, then?—Did he, you called your friend, never confide to you—that

there was reason to believe that he was *not* dead—and more than this—reason to believe that a son of his lives *also*?”

“We did not love to refer to that painful story.—It was useless to recall a time so distressing—and William Aubrey—I understand it too well now—used to flinch from the subject, as if those wounds were still too recent to bear to be touched—I am a hard, unfeeling man, myself—but I loved my friend, for what I thought—what I thought people would call—his sensibility.”

“Mr. Glenroy may recollect, that he seemed very much displeased when allusion was made to the possibility of the fact of Edward’s existence a day or two ago—I was so nervous at the time that I had not courage to say more—but he must not believe that I intended to let the subject thus be passed over:—either by word of mouth, or by letter, I had resolved to make him acquainted with all I knew. I felt sure he was not aware of the full force of the facts I had gathered—and it was necessary

that, at least, he should know the grounds upon which I was acting."

She then went on to relate all she had learned upon the subject of Edward Aubrey's probable fate; to which Mr. Glenroy listened with deep attention. She was proceeding to add her own surmises and convictions—but he laid that knotty hand of his upon her arm again, and somewhat roughly stopped her—

"The facts—Nothing but the unadorned facts, if you please, Madam."

She did as he desired her; and without further comment went on to relate the history of the little boy.

To this he also listened with mute attention—pressing her arm again as she concluded her narrative, as if to prevent her adding a word more.

He remained without changing the attitude in which he had been sitting, listening in deep thought, for a considerable time.—He was carefully reviewing all that he had heard—he was endeavouring to arrive at a just view of the cir-

cumstances; and, as he thought—trying to discover the truth. He fancied that he was doing this without a bias; but he was so invincibly one-sided, that this was impossible.—And then, the little girl!—This partiality which had assumed the shape of a passion! A passion made up of all that was best in his character—and what passions are so dangerous and delusive as those—and which lent its colour to everything.—He thought he was wise, and fair, and just, and sensible in doing as he had done the night before—in yielding to that strong leaning of his character against everything that was imaginative or exceptional, and laying hold of the prominent—what may be called the prosaic, obvious side of every case. He thought he was only acting the part of a straightforward, sensible man—as he thus spoke, when at last he did speak—in a serious measured tone, weighing every word as he uttered it—

“It seems like a fatality . . The same elements of uncertain facts, ill-defined suspicions, and imperfect conjectures, in both instances—The

same hasty—excuse me, Madam—the same seeming inclination to jump to hasty conclusions—the same incomprehensible bias *against* the interests of the young child—And the same,” he added, slightly raising his voice, and seeming to warm a little as he proceeded—“the same call upon me—the same duty imposed upon me to defend the cause of one who has, as it appears, no champion but myself.—Madam, our parts are reversed—We must not harshly judge each other—but, Heaven knows! I would be glad to believe that yours was the more difficult of the two.—I would be glad to read *that* in the mother’s breast—which would make the part she has undertaken, perhaps, a little more painful than it appears just at present to be.—A mother’s leanings are usually for her child—but the child of William Aubrey is . . . Well! well! it is a dry, hard heart, they say, that lies beneath this old breast of mine—but, good or bad, it shall warm for her!”

“Excuse me,”—as Lady Emma was about to interrupt him—“I shall soon have finished all I wish to say.”

“This history, then, is like the other history—it may by possibility be true—but I, for one, do not believe it; and the law of this land, if appealed to, would upon such evidence, I am persuaded, reject it—but, true or not, it avails nothing. The money comes to William Aubrey by testament—and by testament it descends to his child. Whether the unfortunate man you speak of perished or not, makes no difference as to her rights—no more than the awful revelation which has this day been made to me. That wrong, if done, *is* done; and it is now impossible to repair it—William Aubrey should have executed that—unhappy man!

“He did—he did!—I have the paper, Grace Birchell drew up at his dictation—but, alas! alas!—it was too late—he died before he signed it.”

He took the paper—his hand slightly shook, as he brushed the back of it hastily across his eyes.

“This paper is utterly worthless,” he said, “and it is well for many helpless creatures

that it is so. The terms of it would involve the property in endless law-suits, during which everything would fall to ruin, and hundreds of neglected beings sink to misery, body and soul. Be content, madam, that things are as they are. That little child has a princely heart—or rather, if history does not lie—a heart such as rarely falls to the share of the children of princes. Let us have done with vain and unprofitable scruples, and unite our endeavours, so to act, and so to rear her, that this kingdom, which has through such strange, perplexing circumstances fallen to her share, may be so administered by us, and by her—as to be a blessing to the numerous souls who on her depend—souls dependent upon her—not alone for the bread which perisheth, but for that better bread, and that living water which nourisheth to everlasting life.”

“ Ah—but . . . wrong!—wrong!—How can what is good ever come of wrong?—Oh! that I could but think as you do—poor

Edward!—Poor, disinherited Edward!—Poor defrauded little boy!”

“Again!” he said, with renewed displeasure in his tone—“Are we never to have done with this?”

“Never,” she said, “unless some means of reconciliation can be found.”

“Some compromise, you mean. The word sounds jesuitical in matters of this nature—but I do not mean a compromise with justice—for I do not admit the justice—but a compromise between your view of this subject and mine. If *that* can be found, so as to satisfy a spirit which I see and believe sincerely desires the just—though the sense of justice is, as it appears to me, somewhat swayed by inclination and prejudice—we will try to find it. Do you search for such a compromise upon your side, as I will do upon mine—honest purpose seldom fails of its object. In one thing only, your ladyship must yield to me. The child, however other things may be arranged, must be kept in ignorance of this

story. And, so long as my authority lasts, she shall—she must—be left to the free, spontaneous action and unfettered development of her character, in order to fit her for the position in life to which she has been called. We must not perplex her by communicating the vain scruples of others—nor destroy the best faith of her heart, by revealing this miserable tale of sin and falsehood, which has preceded her. Let her grow up to her own fair perfections. Teach her the instability of all human possessions—teach her to look up to the Hand which gave—and may, as it gave, take away—teach her this—for this is truth—truth universal. As for the wretched man's history, let it be consigned again to that silence—which had better never have been broken”

CHAPTER XI.

And the pure and good intent
Of the child He noted well,
And the high and holy bent
Of the thoughts he could not tell.

MRS. ACTON TINDAL.

It is certain that the legal opinions, when they arrived, coincided with Mr. Glenroy's views.—That the matter should, if possible, be made the subject of family arrangement, was suggested in each one of the opinions sent in by the several eminent lawyers who had been consulted, but all agreed, that unless further evidence in confirmation of Alice Craven's assertions were forthcoming—upon the existing grounds, no court of justice on earth would deprive a child of its father's inheritance.

The opinions agreed, also, in another and still more important point—namely, that even admitting the story of Alice Craven to be true, the terms of Mr. Aubrey's (the father) will were such, that it would be very doubtful whether any question could be raised as to the property being legally his reputed son's.

Such being the state of things,—Emma and her friends felt that nothing more was to be done.—Time might bring forward circumstances in confirmation of the truth—on whichever side it lay.—There was nothing left for it, but to submit to let things take their course, and be patient.

In the meanwhile, nature seemed to have taken to a certain degree the confirmation of the story, into her own hands.—The resemblance the little boy bore to Edward, strengthened every day—as did the likeness which—now attention was directed to the subject—it was impossible to deny that the little girl bore to Alice Craven.

This likeness lay not precisely in feature,

still less in complexion—for the little Imogene, in this respect, inherited a considerable share of her mother's beauty,—but in indescribable turns of expression, tones, and gestures, not to be overlooked.

Yet nothing further could be done.

Emma, however, gained one point,—that the little girl should be brought up under a peculiar sense of the instability of all human things, and that she herself should be allowed to make this idea a more prominent part of her moral teaching than is usual, or perhaps desirable, in general. In her own mind, she likewise resolved to have recourse to another expedient.

The only possible way to satisfy her sense of justice, and restore, as far as she could, that property to Edward, of which in two several ways he had been so unrighteously defrauded, lay—as it appeared to her—in the scheme of uniting the two children in marriage, when they should arrive at the proper age.

It was one of those plans, which had so

much the aspect of romance, that she felt it impossible even to allude to it with Mr. Glenroy. She wanted courage to expose herself to the polite sarcasms, which she believed such a plan of reconciling difficulties would call forth. She feared, too, that the scheme might meet with direct opposition upon his part,—yet she clung to it, as a just and righteous heart clings to the only possible scheme it can devise, for extrication from an involuntary act of injustice.

The more she considered her plan, the more it appeared to her—if feasible—to be the best, nay, the only one to be adopted. Sanguine of temper, and little experienced in the perversity of the human temper, nothing appeared to her more natural than the idea.—It was only necessary to bring the children up together ; to promote their affection in every way ; and to keep them as much as possible separated from others—to insure success.

They were both possessed of rare loveliness

in their several ways—they must, of course, under such advantages for the growth of peculiar affection, prefer each other to all the world. *

Thus she settled this matter with herself;—and, having once arranged the plan in her own mind, she did as people are so apt to do with schemes of this description,—she made an idol of it;—and, to this idol, she was soon ready to sacrifice every other consideration.

It is to be observed, also, that, in spite of the confidence she reposed in Grace and Mr. Birchell, she did not mention the matter to either of them.—She nursed it as her hidden consolation and treasure—one of those secret joys, with which no stranger, not even the closest friend, shall intermeddle.—She hugged it to her heart; and it was to her what a saint, a divinity, is to the superstitious worshipper of such false gods. Her spiritual life had not yet advanced beyond this.

She could not walk uprightly from day to day—trusting that the Author of truth and

justice would, in His own good time, as she proceeded, point out the course which duty commanded her to pursue. She must lay down a plan, the result of which it was impossible for her to secure ; and, in the prosecution of this plan, which was to reconcile all her doubts and scruples, she was to find consolation and peace.—And, certainly, she did, at first, find both.

Under the hidden influence of such thoughts, her mind recovered, in some degree, its composure ; her life, its purpose. She could look forward cheerfully to the issues of this perplexing story ; for every principle of justice and every craving of secret affection were to be satisfied thus. The restless feeling with which she had regarded the little girl—the innocent cause of so much secret distress—abated ; though, alas, it was yet impossible for her to regard her in the wholesome light of maternal affection. Imogene still remained an enigma and a mystery ;—a source of anxious interest, rather than of spontaneous love.

The next thing that was necessary to be done, so far as Mr. Glenroy was concerned, was to signify to that gentleman her intention of receiving the young Eugene at Haughton ; and, until more could be learned of his father's fate, providing for his education herself, out of the large allowance bequeathed to her. To this, Mr. Glenroy—a little to the surprise of Emma and the Birchells—offered not the slightest opposition ;—perhaps, in spite of all his professions, he was not, in secret, sorry himself, that something in the way of compensation should thus be secured to the boy.

He had seen Eugene ; and, though he would not acknowledge it, the extraordinary resemblance the child bore to Edward Aubrey did not escape him.

And so, thus far, things were settled, as it appeared, upon the fairest and best footing of which circumstances would admit.

The little Imogene was received as the acknowledged heiress—the future queen of these immense possessions. Emma, as her

mother, and in the receipt of a very plentiful income, took her place as regent of the castle ; under, however, the somewhat strict supervision and interference of her co-guardian, Mr. Glenroy, who, in any matters which he deemed of importance, and on which his views might differ from hers, would not allow his authority to be disputed. The little Eugene was to be received at the Hall, in a short time, and Lady Emma's heart opened to welcome him, and to treat him as a near relation, whose position in life was, in every respect, equal to that of his cousin.

As the son of the renowned Omar Bey, whose great and good deeds in Egypt had obtained a certain reputation even in remote, western Europe—too often so ignorant and so indifferent as to what is doing in the Eastern world—he was secure of his position.

Mr. Glenroy now prepared, for the present, to take his leave.

The feast he had promised little Moggie that she should give to her miners and their families could not, of course, come off at present. Time must elapse before it would be proper or decent to allow of any festive doings of this sort upon the hapless William Aubrey's property. Lady Emma, indeed, still continued very averse to everything that could in any manner bring the little girl prominently forward in the character of Heiress of Haughton Hall; but Mr. Glenroy would listen to no difficulties of this sort. He, however, yielded to her urgent entreaties, that a year might elapse before any very open demonstrations of this kind were made, for he could not object to that mark of respect to his deceased friend's memory. It was, therefore, fixed that in somewhat more than a year from the present time—when little Moggie should have completed her seventh year—this entertainment, upon which the child's heart was quite fixed, should take place.

It was upon a following occasion of this description, some years afterwards, that I be-

came acquainted with the dwellers at Haughton Hall—but, before giving an account of that, a few circumstances must be related. And, first, let us inquire how Lady Emma commenced that most difficult enterprise, upon the success of which the whole happiness of her life, and all her future peace of mind, seemed to depend.

One most sinister event was the first to take place—an event which hastened the removal of Eugene to Haughton Hall. Mr. Birchell was preferred to an Archdeaconry in the East Indies; and thus Emma was deprived of the advice and assistance of her judicious friends, at a time when they were so greatly needed.

She had not, as I said, ever confided her scheme to Mrs. Birchell. A kind of instinctive dread of her friend's disapprobation kept her silent; and yet, if she could have ventured to inquire, she must have found, that not only Mr. and Mrs. Birchell, but possibly even Mr. Glenroy himself, nourished an unconfessed hope that to this conclusion the story might

come at last—a conclusion that would reconcile all difficulties, and satisfy all scruples.

They were, however, far too wise to breathe such an idea; assured, as they were, that a suspicion of the existence of such a plan, was the most likely way to defeat it.

Mr. Glenroy and little Imogene passed much of their time together during the few days he remained at the Hall;—for Lady Emma, thoroughly exhausted by the struggles she had gone through, sank, when the combat ended, under the consequent reaction.

She mostly kept her room until dinner time—not asking for her little girl, whose presence was still too painful to her irritable nerves.—Little Moggie, therefore, after having been taken to her Mamma's bed-side to receive her morning kiss, was left to herself—and Mr. Glenroy was certain, after a few hours devoted to business, to lay claim to her.

He carried her with him in all his excursions to visit and inspect the property—which he made a principle of doing upon a regular

system, until every portion of it had been carefully explored and surveyed. He did not think, as many might have done, that this child was too young to profit by such opportunities—he had not been slow to perceive the excellence of her capacity, or the generous strength and rectitude of her disposition—he was deeply interested in her, and had formed to himself an ideal of what such a being, under such circumstances, might be led to become,—but he thought that—except as far as he himself was concerned—the influences that surrounded her, were peculiarly unfavourable.

The reason why men so rarely succeed when they undertake the task of education, is, I think, that they are too absolute in their ideas; they overlook the fact, that every individual education is a fresh experiment, and are negligent of the various shadings and softenings, that are necessary to make any general system harmonise with any one individual character.

Perhaps, however, in this instance, Mr. Glenroy was less mistaken than characters so

dogmatical and absolute in their views as his, usually find themselves at last to be ; for certainly he was not deceived in the confidence he placed in the character of this remarkable child. She responded in a way, that many will think an incredible exaggeration, to his instructions and exhortations—and before he quitted Haughton, had imbibed as decided an impression of her own place, dignity, and responsibility, as he could possibly wish.

You would have smiled to have seen the grave attention, with which the little thing followed his pointing hand with her eye, when in visiting the different farms, he drew the attention of the agent who accompanied him, to repairs that were necessary, or improvements desirable to be made—the interest she took in the subject, or the quickness with which she began, herself, to detect little matters that were defective, or wanting—but such were things of indifference to her, in comparison with her anxiety upon the subject of Armidale. The impression Mr. Glenroy had laboured to produce

was indelible, and it was a constant subject of her inquiries,—“What was to be done for the poor men that worked under the ground.”

He took her to the place once or twice more—for he was himself deeply interested in the subject, and was shocked, indeed, to find how far the right administration of this large community had been neglected. He did not worry, or confuse the child's imagination, you may be sure, by directing her attention to the greater evils and oppressions of the system—the way of paying wages—the truck system—the want of proper religious instruction, and so on; but he taught the child to sympathize with the children of her own age—explained to her the necessity of instruction—the vice, disease, and misery consequent upon idleness—proposed that she should lay the foundation-stone of an infant school, to be begun upon immediately, and that she should herself visit it regularly, “because,” he said, “you know *you* can find out whether little children, younger than yourself, are happy and good.”

Oh, how the little creature pressed the hand she held, and leaped up for joy!—And how gaily she prattled away—what a thousand questions to be asked—how she loved Mr. Glenroy! They became, in truth, the greatest friends in the world, and it was with a pang that he would have thought himself quite incapable of feeling, that he at length tore himself away—promising very shortly to return.

It was not till Mr. Glenroy had taken his departure, that Lady Emma began to breathe. His presence was like an incubus upon her bosom. She feared him, and she disliked him, and yet she respected him—respected him too much not to feel the weight of his opinion—though fearing and disliking him too much to enter upon and discuss a subject with anything approaching to ease; and no fetters are so onerous, perhaps, as those imposed by respect, when sympathy and liking are not. However, he was gone—and, in a few days, the Birchells must go, too, and little Eugene make his *entrée* at Haughton Hall. To engage the affection

and good will of its little mistress in his behalf, and lay the foundation for stronger ties hereafter, was now the greatest of Emma's anxieties.

To engage the little girl's interest through her feelings, was the plan she resolved upon—for she knew and understood the excellence of the heart in whose generosity she confided.

CHAPTER XII.

Oh thou goddess,
Thou divine nature, how thyself thou blazon'st
In these two children !

CYMBELINE.

“LITTLE MOGGIE,” began Lady Emma, one morning, in a voice of unusual softness, which went straight to the little girl's heart,—“come and sit down by me—I have a story to tell you.”

Little Moggie, who was sitting upon a low stool by the window, busily intent upon the intricate mysteries of a double full-blown rose, which she was endeavouring to transfer to the small square of canvass she held in her hand, arose alert and happy, responding to the affectionate

tone of voice by her sweet, loving countenance.

“Nay, bring your cushion with you—and your work, and sit down here, close by me—and between me and the window. You can listen and do nothing, you know, though you *do* hold that pretty beginning of a rose in your hand, my little one.”

Little Moggie cheerfully obeyed. She came hugging the velvet cushion, upon which she had been sitting, with both her hands; and her mother looked on and smiled upon the little overloaded toiler, struggling along as one sees some minute ant over-burthened by a straw. The business was, however, accomplished—the cushion placed close to Lady Emma’s knee, between her and an open window, which commanded the lovely sylvan and champaign view which stretched before the front of Haughton Hall. One little hand rested upon Lady Emma’s lap, the other held the work. The earnest eyes were lifted to the mother’s face.

“Now, Mamma,”—settling herself upon her

cushion, in that pretty way little children do who feel themselves particularly comfortable.

“There was once a little boy,” began Lady Emma—“of about little Moggie’s age. He was a sweet, beautiful, good child; but, poor little thing, he had no mamma—and his papa was a great, great way off—so far away, that nobody knew whether he was alive or dead—and the poor little boy had no brother nor sister—nor any one to love him, except two kind friends. *They* were very kind—but they could only love and pity him—they could not defend him from a very great wrong.”

“Do you understand me, dear?”—as the dark grey eyes were lifted up, and fixed upon hers, with an expression of sorrowing sympathy, mingled with perplexity.—“Do you understand, little girl, what I mean, by a very great wrong?”

“Look round you, Imogene, at this beautiful room in which we are sitting, and now out of the window over the gardens and shrubberies, at this fine view,

and at this fine house.—You think this all very nice and pretty, don't you,"—Lady Emma continued.

"Oh! so pretty!—and so sweet!" cried little Moggie—who, young as she was, possessed a most exquisite sense of the beautiful in nature.

"And you think yourself very happy to live in so charming a place, don't you?"

"Yes, Mamma,—I love it all very, very much,—and Mr. Glenroy says, I cannot love it *too* much—for its all all, my own, own, and I need never, never, go away."

A cloud passed over Lady Emma's face.

"This was the way Mr. Glenroy talked to you, sometimes?"

"Oh! numbers and numbers of times,—always! He was always saying—'Remember—all these things are little Moggie's own, and she must be a very good child,—and deserve them, and take care of them.'—And so I will, indeed, Mammie,"—with that half imploring, half deprecating look, which the little face

assumed, when she thought Lady Emma, for some unaccountable reason, spoke coldly to her.

Lady Emma sighed, coloured, — her heart smote her as usual, whenever she indulged this unjust humour. She took the delicate tiny hand in hers, and pressed it—upon which little sign of amity, the small fingers twined themselves round hers like clasping ivy buds.

“This little boy, my Imogene—had a right to as beautiful a place as this—and to all the good things which Mr. Glenroy tells you are to be yours; but, by a very wicked falsehood, people have robbed him of them. Perhaps, some day or other, he may get them back, but I don’t know—he has no one here to take his part. Perhaps his father may, some day or other, come home and right him, but I don’t know; in the meantime, this little ill-used boy wants a home, because the friends I told you of are forced to go away, and cannot take him with them. And,” she went on,

“we have plenty of room here, little girl, I think—and I mean to ask him to come and live with us till his father comes back again—if ever he does come back again; and what I want of my little Moggie is, that she will love this little boy—and that she will remember how ill people have used him, and try to make him so happy that he shall forget it. Will my Moggie do this?”

Under that name, and so conjured, what would not the loving heart have done? But it wanted no prompting, where a deed of pity or generosity was to be performed—it responded to sympathy like the harp-strings to the breath of the morning.

“Poor, poor little boy!—Oh, Mammie! I am so glad you will have him here—Oh, yes! We will love him, and be very, very, very kind to him—won’t we, Mammie dear?”

Lady Emma stooped down and kissed the forehead of the small, earnest, upturned face.

“And now, don’t you want to know who the little boy is, and what is his name?—He

is a little boy you know already—it is little Eugene—Mrs. Birchell's own, darling little Eugene.—You love him already, I am sure,—he is such a sweet, pretty boy, Imogene, is he not?”

“Yes,” said Imogene,—but she looked rather disappointed. The childish fancy, perhaps, had pictured something in the stranger quite different.—It was a certain letting down of the imagination, to discover that the hero of this romance, was an every-day playmate. Eugene was certainly a beautiful child; but he was too nearly the age of Imogene herself to inspire that admiration which children feel for personal beauty in infants, or in grown persons; they seem scarcely conscious of the charm of loveliness in those of much their own age.

“Don't you love Eugene dearly?” inquired Lady Emma, with anxiety—“He is such a sweet, little boy.”

“I love Mamma, and—Mr. Glenroy,” was Moggie's answer.

“But you cannot help loving such a dear, sweet child as Eugene, surely!”

Little Moggie was silent.

“Why, what can this mean?” cried Lady Emma, with some slight impatience—“what can you mean, Imogene?—Surely you are not such an unjust child as to have taken a dislike to the poor little boy—and he so unfortunate, too.”

“I forgot that,” said the little girl, casting down her eyes.

“Then you will love him—you will promise me to love him, Imogene,” said Lady Emma, looking very anxious.—“Poor little Eugene, robbed of a beautiful—beautiful place, just like this;—think of that, Imogene—love him—you must and will love him, or you would be very hard-hearted and naughty, indeed.”

The little girl’s eyes filled with tears.

“I won’t be naughty—I want to be good, Mamma.”

“Then you will love and be kind to poor Eugene.—Promise me, Imogene, that you will.”

But the child drew back.—Already she had learned to be very conscientious upon the subject of promises.

“Little Moggie will try to be a good, and not a naughty, hard-hearted child.”

And this was all the satisfaction that could be got from her.

“But, Imogene,” persisted Lady Emma,—“only put yourself into his place.—Suppose some very wicked person were to come and tell a great many bad lies, and get you and me turned into the street,—would not every kind person try to love, and pity, and help us?—Don’t forget it, Imogene;—Never, never forget it, little girl—You don’t know. It cannot enter into your head to guess, how cruelly that poor little boy has been used,—and everybody is against him—and another child has got all the beautiful things that belong to him.”

“That is a naughty child,” observed little Moggie.

“No—the child does not know, for nobody has told her but——Moggie, dear, put your-

self into the place of that child—because, you know Mr. Glenroy tells you what a quantity of things are yours—and try to think, if I were that child, what I would do for the poor robbed boy that everybody goes against—and then you will love Eugene, and be very kind to him—I am sure—sure you will—Don't you think, Imogene, you must be very hard-hearted if you were not."

The little head was bent down, in silent reflection as it appeared. Children, young as this, reflect much when they have such heads and such hearts as my little Moggie.

"Think, Moggie—think, Imogene"—Lady Emma kept reiterating, with an earnestness approaching to severity, that was anything but wise under the circumstances.

"Mamma," at last Imogene replied, with a gravity worthy rather of her station than of her years, and as if she already felt something of the effect of her own dignity—"Little Moggie will be a good girl—and 'Be you to others,' to poor little Eugene."

The ‘Be you to others’—was the title she gave to a simple verse it was her custom to repeat every night with her prayers—

Be you to others kind and true,
As you’d have others be to you ;
And neither do nor say to men,
Whate’er you would not like again.

“And Moggie will try all she can to make him happy—and give him up everything, because he has nothing.”

The mother ought to have clasped the little darling to her heart; but such rapture was not for her, in the perplexity and confusion of her feelings; yet she did lay her hand tenderly, and almost reverently upon the small head, and whispered—“God bless you, Moggie—for you are a good child.”

And the child, with a perseverance that would have done honour to one of far riper years, redeemed her promise.

The docility, the intelligence, the aspirations after all that is generous, kind, and good to be remarked in some children of this age, is wonderful. Little Moggie is no monster—her heart and intelligence are described from the life.—The next morning Lady Emma and her little Imogene, set forward immediately after breakfast, in the carriage, to fetch Eugene. The little girl was in high spirits, and full of her schemes and plans to ensure Eugene's happiness.

She had already made a division of her possessions in the way of toys,—reserving her two beloved dolls to herself, without scruple; but allotting to him by far the largest and best portion of all beside. The evening before she had led Lady Emma to her garden—which, by the express desire of Mr. Glenroy, was left to her own management and care.—The piece was too large for her little arms actually to keep in cultivation; but everything was directed by herself, and the man who assisted her was strictly forbidden to interfere in her

plans, except by a slight suggestion now and then. So the garden was a tiny fairy creation of a child's fancy, with twisting walks, and mounts topped with a shrub or so—and grottoes, and flowers—all put down in a pretty but very complete confusion.

Little of plan there appeared, but much of plan there nevertheless was, in the young artist's head; and when she came to the division of the garden—and to the destruction of her schemes, by thus breaking the unity of the design, and partitioning it into two portions, she felt very sorry.

Lady Emma observed that she looked rather downcast, as, hand-in-hand, they approached the spot where one of the gardeners was busily employed making—as she had directed—a ditch, surmounted by a hedge of sweet briar, through the very centre of her picture. Most anxious to cultivate every affectionate feeling in Imogene towards the new-comer, Lady Emma regretted that the connection should begin by what was evidently a painful sacrifice upon little Moggie's part.

“But you are sorry to give up so much of your garden, Imogene, I can see—Why do you?—Surely, the gardener can make another garden for Eugene without disturbing yours.”

“But it won’t be so pretty—I know it won’t; and it can’t be so full of flowers—I know it can’t;—because that’s not possible, —unless you planted the flowers by their stems,” laughing, “like the silly little boy in the story.”

“Mamma,” she went on, with a pretty seriousness, “we must not forget that poor Eugene has had his pretty gardens *robbed* away from him——”

“No, my dear one; we will never forget that—and we will love him very much, and be very kind to him, won’t we?—Little Moggie will *love* him—he’s such a sweet little boy—Moggie can’t help loving him.”

Alas! she is taking the way I fear to overshoot the mark, at which she aims with such an almost agonising desire to succeed.

The two children, hand-in-hand, employed

the principal part of the afternoon of that day, in running about the walks and terraces, and visiting all little Imogene's favourite nooks and corners.

The little Eugene seemed perfectly happy, and accepted all the nice things which she had set apart for him, with the ease of one to whom they, in right, might have belonged. He did not seem aware of the extent of Imogene's kindness and generosity ; indeed, his attention was not very much excited by these offerings. —He did appear indifferent to most toys, and especially to those, the use of which required much activity, and he took little pleasure in the possession of his garden—a possession it had cost her so much to surrender. He seemed fonder of wandering about, inhaling, as it were the beauty around him, than of busying himself in a thousand ways, like the ever-active little mistress of these possessions. He would lie under a tree, and listen to the singing of the birds, and the hum of the insects in the sun, as long as she would let him alone ; and

was evidently rather teased than delighted with her endeavours to make him take part in what she thought such charming occupations.

Not a book did she read, but her active and creative spirit seemed intent upon realising the pictures represented. She had her Robinson Crusoe's cave; the cabin of the children in the Robinson Suisse; fairy bowers and magic gardens without end. Eugene looked at them with pleasure, but, that he would aid in the creation of such, by his personal exertions, the indefatigable little, labouring bee soon found it vain to expect. He was a poet, not an artificer.

This was a disappointment.

It would have been such a bond of union between them to have worked together; but she was obliged to content herself with his taking the part of a spectator and critic of what she did. And this, in fact, gave new zest to her occupations, so that her cheerful spirit was soon contented that things should be as they were.

And so the two children settled down into the parts in harmony with their respective characters, though not exactly those that from their sex they ought to have assumed.

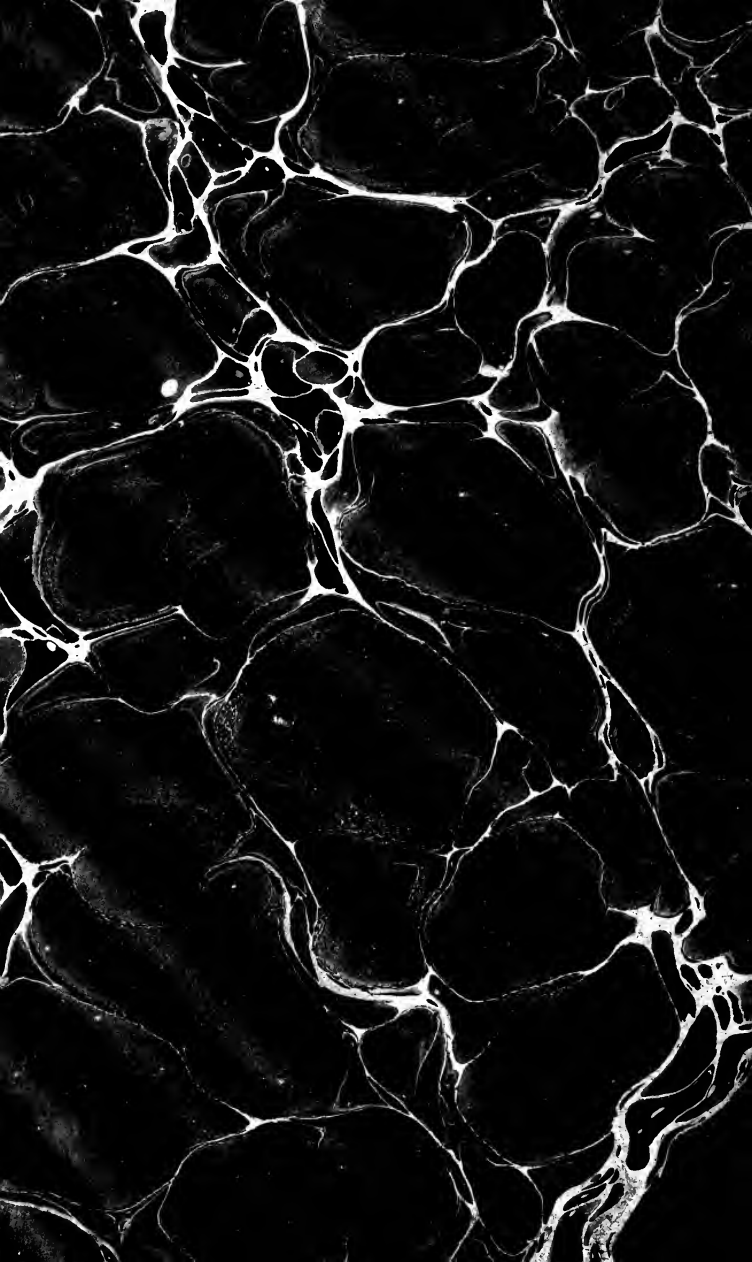
Thus far, however, it was well—their inclinations did not cross each other. Her love of action, and schemes of creation and progression were not interfered with by Eugene. He was content that most things should be managed in her own way, provided he could indulge in the enjoyment of what was accomplished. Nay, so far had the two exchanged characters, that the task of protecting, as well as of working for him, fell upon the girl—though this only lasted during their early childhood—She had to beat off many a cat, and to keep her mother's cross little pet-dog in order; for Eugene would stamp, and cry, and scream with terror at the slightest approach of anything alarming.

It was Imogene who first attempted the pony, Lady Emma had provided them with; Imogene who first scaled the steep slip-

pery paths in the shrubberies behind the house ; Imogene, who, laughing and bantering, encouraged her little friend to exertions of labour or of courage ;—and yet, strange as it may appear, this very necessity for protection seemed to be laying the foundation of that affection which Lady Emma so passionately desired should exist. Eugene had something undoubtedly interesting about him,—children of the poetical temperament are usually so to those who know them intimately and nearly—If Imogene worked for and protected both, she had her reward, when seated together under some wide-branching beech or plane tree, Eugene would beguile the hours by tales and stories of his own inventing, or by a talk so full of imagery and fancy, that it was the delight of her life to listen to it.



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